REMINISCENCES OF A RANCHMAN

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE RED-BLOODED

Cloth net 1/-

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REMINISCENCES OF A RANCHMAN

BY

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"The Red-Blooded," etc.

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TO THE MEMORY OF

CLARENCE KING,

HIS RANCH PARTNER AND LIFELONG FRIEND,

AND TO THAT OF

TEX (B. FULLER) AND SAM CRESS,

THE BEST COWBOYS HE EVER KNEW AND THE

STANCHEST MATES HE EVER HAD,

THE AUTHOR AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATES THIS BOOK

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CHAPTER ONE

A DESERT SPORT

"Ah, yes, indeed, my boy, you are quite right. My years in the Sierras and plains of California, Oregon, and Nevada were the happiest I have ever known or ever expect to know.

"Science I love, but geology is the only branch of science that could have held me to its active, persistent pursuit.

"For me the study or the laboratory would have been utterly impossible.

"The working geologist, on the contrary, dwells in close contact with Nature in her wildest and most savage moods. He seeks the solution of his problems where vast dynamic forces have in past ages crumpled the earth's crust and brought huge mountain ranges into being—ranges that expose its structure and tell much from which we may deduce how its structure was accomplished.

"Our tasks take us out across the rolling yellow billows of the plains, through the profound silences of burning deserts, whose colours would fire the artist's brain to frenzy, up into the magnificent uplifts of the Sierras, with their singing brooks and roaring torrents, their majestic redwoods and fragrant pines, their smiling, flowery glades and sinister bald summits, their warm, sheltered nooks and grim, pitiless glaciers—out beyond civilisation and settlements, where to sustain himself man must confront the raw forces of animate and inanimate nature, as did our forebears of the stone age,

and conquer or succumb. It is a life that develops weird types, and it is of one of these I am about to tell you."

The speaker was Clarence King, one of the intellectual princes of the earth, with a stout berserker heart set in a breast tender of sentiment as a woman's, a man whose friends were many as the folk he knew.

It was in 1875.

He was then engaged in compiling, from his notes, the reports and maps of the field work on the 40th Parallel which, scientifically, remain his greatest monument, assisted in this work by S. F. Emmons, Jas. T. Gardiner, and Arnold Hague, his field staff.

On the introduction and recommendation of John Hay, then lately returned from service as Minister to Spain, and at the time an editorial writer on *The Tribune*, King had employed me as a sort of secretary to assist in the publication of the reports.

We were spending the summer in Newport, living and working in the old hip-roofed house at the corner of Church and High Streets that had belonged to his aunt, Caroline King, a house bright with the rich fabrics, grim with the weird carvings and porcelains and fragrant with the strange scents of the Far East, where King's father and two uncles were the first American traders, and where all three lost their lives most tragically.

It was during a lull in the work—and the lulls came often and sometimes lasted through many working hours ; came often as a new stage of the notes reached reminded him of battles fought and won in his struggles for the mastery of old Paleozoic secrets—thirsting in the Bad Lands, scorching in the Mojave Desert, slipping on glacial slopes of Mt. Whitney, leaping crevasses on Mt. Rainier, struggles with broncos, fights with grizzlies, scraps with Indians—tales to fire the

love of adventure latent in most youngsters; tales that fired mine and turned the tables of my life, turned me from the newspaper work then my trade and made me mount a train the very day after my work with him was finished, ticketed straight away to Cheyenne.

"It was while I was with Brewer," King resumed. "We had finished a season's field work and were journeying across the Humboldt Desert, with a pack outfit, to our California headquarters.

"The Indians were bad that year, and we had with us a small escort of ten cavalrymen.

"Our two packers, besides being worthy knights of the Diamond Hitch, were otherwise accomplished.

"Fresno Pete was a half-breed Mexican *vaquero*, earlier famous from the Fresno to the Sacramento as a bronco buster. Many the time on *dias de fiesta*, at some *rancho* or *placita* of the San Joaquin Valley, sloe-eyed señoritas smiled, silver-girt *sombreros* were tossed in air, many-coloured *rebosos* waved, and lusty *bravos* shouted in compliment to some victory of Fresno Pete's over all comers, *vaqueros* and horses alike—and the San Joaquin was for many years famous for breeding the wildest broncos and best busters in the State.

"Faro Harry was a Virginia City gambler, a graceful, supple figure, sinuous of movement as a snake, quick as a cat, and of a superhuman dexterity with a pistol, who, by his own reserved account, had sought service with us for his health. But from observation of his perfect physique and some knowledge of the high esteem in which he was held by Virginia's undertakers, Harry's real motive for absenting himself from the rich pickings of mine owners' private rolls and pay rolls, and contenting himself with a packer's modest pay, was surmised by our party to lie in the fact that the local Virginia 'Boot Hill' (especially reserved to the occupancy

of gentlemen who had passed out of this life with their boots on) was full to overflowing, suggesting temporary suspension of his recreations until a contemplated addition to the ' Hill ' could be made ready.

" We had been on very scant rations of water for forty-eight hours, our throats and nostrils parched and our skin cracked by the fierce heat and blinding sands of the desert. It was, therefore, with the greatest satisfaction we pitched camp early one afternoon in the little clump of cottonwoods about Antelope Spring, the only water on the desert trail, and by turns buried our faces in its cool depths and lolled in the shade its waters fed.

" The spring was then held, by right of occupancy at least, if by no better title, by Old Man Tison, a hunter well-nigh sixty, but strong and active as in his youth—a tall, gaunt, sinewy man, with a shock of iron-gray hair falling over the collar of his buckskin shirt; great festoons that looked like Spanish moss pendent from his chin, close-set, fierce gray eyes glaring out from ambush beneath other clusters of gray moss, with hands like hams and moccasined feet that left a trail that ' looked like where a bunch of deer had bedded,' in the vernacular of the region.

" Tison's cabin stood perhaps fifty yards from the spring, and there he had dwelt I don't know how many years, with a Pah-Ute squaw for a helpmeet, and seven or eight half-breeds, of assorted sizes, as incidents. He had a few cows and piebald cayuse ponies, but subsisted himself chiefly by selling water and venison to overland travellers, for wayfarers on the desert had as little time to hunt meat as they had opportunity to get water.

" Not long after we pitched camp, refreshed by the water and the shade, I strolled over toward Tison's cabin, for he had not yet been near us. As I approached the cabin, a

great, fierce yellow dog, evidently of a strong mastiff strain, sprang out at me, snarling and snapping viciously. No one showed at the door or the one window of the cabin. Glad of relief from its weight, I had left my pistol belt in camp. Thus I was confronting the dog with bare hands, too far from the door to make it before he could seize me, without even stick or stone in reach, and yet reluctant to call for help from his heedless owner.

"In this dilemma, waiting till the dog dashed up almost upon me, I made a spring, seized him by either jowl, gave him a violent shaking for a moment, and then, releasing one hand, patted him on the head and spoke to him quietly.

"First the savage wrinkles began to smooth out of his face, then his tail started a friendly wag, and the next thing I knew his great paws were on my shoulders, and he was fawning upon me as violently as a few seconds before he had threatened.

"Just at this very moment old Tison himself stepped to the door. He must have heard the snarling and barking, but had seen none of the earlier stages of the incident.

"'Fine dog you have, sir,' I called. 'Must be a splendid watch dog.'

"'Hell he is, I sorta *thort* he *was*. Say, stranger,' he asked, 'did yu-all ever see that thar dog befo'? Were he raised wi' yu, or anythin' thataway?'

"'Why no, I never set eyes on him until this very minute. Has a nice kind temper, hasn't he?'

"'Wall, stranger, sence yu 'pear t' think so much o' him 'n' he o' yu, he's y'urn. Stranger, by —— no man ever handled that thar dog befo' but me, 'n' I won't have airy d——n dog 't airy other feller *kin* handle,' he snapped, in a growl as surly and threatening as his dog's. 'What 'n hell the use o' a d——n dog 't airy fool stranger 't comes along

kin handle ? Might 's well have a passle o' sheep round,' he added, after a moment's pause.

" ' Suppose you and your dog take a running jump for —Yuma,' I suggested, turned back to camp, told Brewer and the boys the incident, and received their congratulations on the cordiality of my reception by the lord of this desert manor.

" And before the laugh at my expense had ceased, a shot rang out from the direction of the cabin, and, looking, we could see the dog's great tawny length writhing in death throes on the sand !

" A half hour later, Tison strolled over to our camp fire, drawled a gruff ' Howdy,' with a comprehensive nod, and stood for some time staring sullenly in the fire. Presently he spoke :

" ' Boys, yu-all's done handled my dog, but I want to tell yu I'm the d——dst best bronco buster 't ever forked a twister, 'n' I got a cayuse 'ts sech plumb p'ison 't nobody's ever sot him fer keeps but me. Ef thar was airy man in this yere camp as thinks he's th' reel thing in *buckjeros*, I'd admire t' see him fork that thar cayuse. O' course, I cain't promise nuthin' t' his widder, 'cept that th' *re*-mains will be gathered 'n' planted wi' cer'monies.'

" This challenge was nothing short of joy to Fresno Pete, who for weeks had been showering rolling Spanish expletives upon the steady pack train mule he rode for its unbearable docility.

" ' Meestar Teeson,' Pete promptly spoke up, ' I weell have much *gusto* try for ride your horse. He keel me—*bueno, no importa*, for I no have woman, me. But, *carajo !* I much more like keel him. Injun cayuse never foaled can t'row Pete.'

" Without another word, Tison strode off to his house,

and soon a couple of little half-breeds were scurrying out over some low sand hills, from behind which they shortly drove in and penned seven or eight ponies. As they entered, Pete picked up his riata, bridle and saddle, and started for the pen, followed by every man in camp, including the cook.

" Arrived, Pete entered and joined Tison, while the rest of us distributed ourselves along the top rails of the corral fence.

" ' Stranger,' growled Tison, ' ef you hain't got no mammy o' neah kin folk 't'll miss yu none, yu might drop yu rope on that thar split-eared pinto, 'n' eff yu cain't git yu' saddle on him, jes' call on th' ole man'—and then he, too, discreetly climbed the fence.

" The pinto indicated was an unusually stocky build for an Indian pony, heavier than the average by two hundred pounds, lacking the usual long barrel, ewe neck and light quarters of his breed—a powerful beast for his inches.

" The moment the lariat noose tightened on his neck, he charged at Peter like a thunderbolt, with mouth open, teeth bared, and such a look of fury on his face that, to Tison's great delight, and the general amusement of the crowd, Pete made a hasty and ignominious ascent of the fence.

" Then Pete slipped down from the fence, caught the end of the trailing rope, and sought to snub it about a snubbing post. But he was too slow. Before he could reach it the pinto was almost upon him, reared on its hind legs, prepared to strike, and Pete had to shift tactics.

" Just as the pinto struck, Pete side-stepped and sprang back fifteen or twenty feet, and then, as the pinto again reared, Pete threw a half-hitch circle in his rope that ran rapidly up the rope till it neatly encircled both forefeet, made a quick run to one side, and gave a stout pull, and brought the pinto to the ground. Before he could rise, Pete lit on

him and soon had the wicked hind hoofs safely half-hitched, and all four feet securely bound together in the ' hog-tie.'

" After that, it was only a matter of a little time to sadde and bridle him, while he thus lay bound upon the ground.

" Then Pete placed his left foot in the stirrup and stood astride the horse, seized reins and saddle horn in his right hand, reached down with his left and released the bound feet, and the pinto rose under him, with Pete firmly settled in the saddle.

" ' Huh ! ' grunted old Tison, ' thinks he's d——n smart, don't he ? Wait till th' pinto lites in to drive his backbone up thru th' top o' his haid, 'n' ef she ain't case-hardened, he'll shore do it.'

" And that the pinto honestly tried to make old Tison's word good we were all ready to admit.

" The gate had been opened, and Pete wanted, of course, to get him outside. But this did not suit the peculiarly devilish strategy of the pinto, who was quick to observe useful first aids to the injured bronco within the walls of the corral itself. Along the north wall of the pen ran a long, low shed, a shed so low that when, after three or four minutes' violent bucking in the centre of the pen that would have unseated most men, the pinto suddenly plunged, bucking high as he could leap, beneath the shed, Pete had to swing his body down alongside the horse, till quite below level of horn and cantle, to save himself.

" Disgusted with this failure the pinto pitched madly twice about the open pen, then stopped and looked about. To his right, a low gate or door had been cut through the solid log wall, leading to a milk pen, the upper log left uncut for lintel. The moment he espied this door, at it the pinto dashed, and rein and spur as he would, Pete could not turn him. Nothing remained but to throw himself bodily out of the saddle, and

so throw himself Pete did (without serious injury), just as the horse plunged through the door, the horn of the saddle catching on the lintel, bursting latigos and tearing out cinch rings, and leaving the saddle a wreck behind him.

" ' Bein' as th' pinto's so easy gaited 'n' kind like, would yu now allow t' ride him bar' back, o' shall we-uns loan yu a saddle ? ' patronisingly queried old Tison.

" ' I tak a saddle, me, *por ese diablo*,' panted Pete.

" Another saddle was quickly brought.

" The pinto, bleeding of flank where the rending saddle had torn him, was driven back into the main corral, Pete again roped him, and, with Harry's help, drove him through the gate into the open, where he was again saddled, and Pete remounted.

" Then ensued a battle royal between bronco and buster, for perhaps twenty minutes—the bronco by turns pitching furiously, and then standing and trying to kick Pete's feet out of the stirrups, or bowing his neck in effort to bite his legs, with an occasional rear and fall backward, while all the time Pete's spurs and quirt were cruelly searching flank and shoulders.

" In the end Pete conquered, rode the pinto quietly back into the pen, drawn of flank, quivering in every muscle, hardly able to stand, and painfully swung out of the saddle, his own nose bleeding severely.

" ' Wall, stranger, I reckon it's up t' me t' say yu shore kin ride some,' grumbled old Tison, and then we all strode back to camp.

" A half hour before supper was called old Tison paid us another visit. For probably ten minutes he stood, glum and silent, among us. Then, suddenly, his face brightened with a happy thought, and, still staring into the fire, he spoke :

" ' Fellers, I 'lows yu-all reckons I'm a purty pore sort o' white trash. Yu done handled my dog 'n' rid th' pinto. But I now puts it up to yu-all cold that thar ain't airy one o' yu bunch kin tech me a shootin' 'v a gun. I'm the shore chief o' th' Humboldt Desert wi' a six-shooter; wi' a six, fellers, I'm a wolf off the headwaters o' Bitter Creek, 'n' it's *my* time t' howl *all* th' time! Don't guess *airy* o' yu fellers kin shoot none, kin yu?'

" This was plainly Faro Harry's cue, and he modestly mentioned that some of his friends thought he could shoot a little, but probably he would not be in it with a real Bitter Creek lead pumper—a gentle piece of irony from a man so expert he could have let Tison draw and then have killed him before he got his gun cocked.

" Tison had shown such an ugly mood that none of us, probably Harry least of all, were certain whether his proposal was meant as an invitation to a fight or a target match. It was, therefore, some relief to us when Tison answered:

" ' Huh! Think yu kin shoot a *leetle*, do they? Wall, yu'll have t' shoot straight as ole Mahster travels when he makes up his mind t' git yu, t' hold a candle t' *me*. Ef yu has no objections, I'll jes shoot yu three shots apiece fo' th' champeenship o' this yere desert; 'n' yu beats me, yu shore wins her.'

" A match was soon arranged, distance ten paces, Harry's target the three spot of spades, Tison's the three of clubs.

" Tison fired his round, aiming carefully and slowly, fairly hitting two of the three clubs, and narrowly missing the third.

" Then Harry, firing quickly and rapidly, sent a ball into each of his three spades, amazingly near the centre of each.

" ' 'Cain't do it agin, with my gun, kin yu?' Tison grumbled.

" Faro promptly took Tison's pistol, and a moment later had almost plugged the three holes previously made in his three spades.

" Tison received back his pistol, turned it over in his hands once or twice, felt of hammer and trigger, and then tossed it on the ground, remarking :

" ' Reckon 't's up to me t' *re*-tire from th' shootin' biznes ! ' and he slouched back to the house.

" As we were sitting down to supper, Professor Brewer remarked to Faro :

" ' Well, Harry, I imagine you have taken the last ounce of brag out of Old Man Tison. Surely there can be nothing else he can fancy himself such a past master of that he will be after us with a new challenge.'

" ' Professor,' answered Harry, ' I has to disagree with you. I know that old coffee-cooler's breed pretty well, and if I'm not badly mistaken, he'll be makin' plays at us till the game closes by our leavin', or at least until he finds a game he can do us at. Mighty stick-to-a-tive kind o' folks, his'n. Cain't just think what she's apt to be, but he's dead sure to spring a new play of some sort.'

" And Faro's prediction proved true as his shooting, for scarcely was our supper finished when out of the darkness and into the circle of our firelight stalked the grim figure of old Tison.

" Come among us, he was chipper and chatty in a measure we realised boded us no good, for it bespoke a joy we had learned he did not indulge, at least in his intercourse with us, except when he believed he had worked out some new scheme for our humiliation. Indeed he was so nearly downright gay, we suspected he had some plan to tackle us *en bloc* instead of individually.

" However, we were not left long in suspense—he was so

pleased with and sure of his new line of attack he could not long hold it, and he also appeared to fear it would take some diplomacy and wheedling to enmesh us.

"'Fellers,' he began, 'I reckon it's up to me t' sorta 'pologise to yu-all. O' course 't ain't calc'lated t' sweeten a feller's temper none t' have his dog handled, his worst outlaw rid, 'n' t' have th' hull lites 'n' liver o' his conceit 'bout bein' th' best gun shot on th' desert kicked plumb outen him at one kick; 'n' then, besides, that d——d old squaw up t' th' cabin, she gets t' steppin' on my narves pow'ful hard sometimes, 'specially lately, gittin' fool idees in her ole Injun head 'bout dressin' up 'n' bein' fash'n'ble 'n' goin' visitin' 'n' travellin', like she sees these yere emigrants' women on th' overland trail dress up 'n' go, 'n' 't's gittin' t' be jest 'bout hell t' git t' hold her. Which-all 's my *ex*-cuse fer treatin' o' yu-all like t' make yu think I feels I wa'n't licked on the squar. But squar 't was 'n' thar's no squeal comin' t' me, 'n' I makes none, 'n' that's what I come over t' tell yu.'

"After a brief pause, a pause so brief we lacked time to make due acknowledgment of his apology, he resumed:

"'But bein' 's I'm here 't jest occurs t' me t' *re*-mark that *my* game's seven-up, 'n' that thar ain't airy feller 'twixt Salt Lake 'n' Sacramento, 'nless some fancy-fingered perfeshnul short-card sharp, whose money ain't like jest nachally findin' it t' me at that thar game. O' cou'se, arter sech a admission, I ain't a invitin' o' anybody t' shuffle 'n' deal wi' me, but I shore got a deck over 't th' cabin that ain't busy none, 'n' ef airy o' yu sci'ntific gents counts gamblin' among yu' 'complishments, an' actooally *insists* on 't, I might be pe'suaded t' go yu a whirl.'

"Oddly enough, Professor Brewer, for a member of the church, was far and away the best seven-up player I ever

knew. He loved the game and played it often—for diversion, never for stake of any kind. But this night, carried away by the humour of the situation, Brewer whispered to me:

"'King, it does seem a duty to take another fall out of that old bunch of conceit; I really believe I ought to tackle him.'

"And he did—strolled with Tison over to the cabin, followed by three of us.

"With the limited bunk space filled to overflowing with half-breeds, and the one table the cabin boasted, back up against the wall, requisitioned as an impromptu bed for two of the overflow, it only remained for Brewer and Tison to convert a bench into a joint seat and table, by sitting astride it, and shuffling and dealing on the bench space between them, the blaze of the fireplace their only light.

"Tison had the courage of his convictions of his own skill, and proposed stakes that made Brewer hesitate, but, with a shrug and smile to us, he accepted and the game was on.

"From the outset Brewer both outheld and outplayed his opponent. Thus it was not long until he had won all the cash Tison was able to wager; and when, about nine o'clock, I and my mates withdrew to camp, Tison had just wagered all the horses he owned, and Brewer had accepted the wager at such valuation as Tison saw fit to name.

"About midnight Brewer entered our tent and awakened us to say:

"'Boys, you can scarcely believe it, but I've won every last thing Old Man Tison possesses—money, spring, cabin, horses and cattle, squaw and half-breeds, down to and including the sucking papoose—and have given it all back to him! And when I told him I had no idea of accepting my winnings, and urged he should regard the evening as just a friendly

game for fun, then he wanted to fight me "fer makin' a —— fool o' him." '

"Very shortly after sunrise the next morning, before breakfast was ready, and even before some of the party were up, Old Man Tison made us another and last visit, his wicked gray eyes reddened and his face haggard from an evidently sleepless night, his hands stuck in his belt—the right dangerously near his gun, which we had sent back to him the previous evening, so near I noted Faro keenly watching his every move.

"And when he spoke his tones were ominous; his voice had lost its slow, soft drawl, and instead carried a crisp, smart, vibrant ring that spelled a mind alert and muscles tense.

"' 'Mo'nin', fellers,' he began; 'pow'ful fine day fer *travellin'*, ain't it? I 'lowed yu-all 'd be a hittin' o' th' trail 'fore this?'

"Faro indiscreetly observed that we were enjoying ourselves so much we thought we might camp with him several days.

"' Hell yu do! Want to be a rubbin' o' 't in, do yu? Well, by ——, I reckon yu won't! Th' handlin' o' my dog, 'n' th' ridin' my pinto, 'n' th' out-shootin' me was all on the squar' 'n' I has no roar t' make, 'n' makes none. 'N' so was th' beatin' o' me at seven-up on the squar', 's fer 's th' game went, 'n' the winnin' o' everything I got; but sence that thar solemncoly sky-pilot-lookin' feller rar'd up on his hind legs 'n' r'fused t' take his winnin's, a makin' o' me look like a hungry houn' pup, too pore t' take anythin' from, my mind's dead sot yu-all come here 'special jes t' see how many different kinds o' a damn fool yu could make outen o' me, 'n' I'm gittin', gradu'lly, mos' terr'ble riled. 'Nless th' sky-pilot-lookin' feller takes 't least th' squaw 'n' th' 'breeds, thar is shore t' be hell's own trouble ef yu-all don't

pull yu'r freight pronto. Mebbeso I kin git t' hold out a hour more, but w'thin that time I'd shore admire t' see yu-all hit th' trail.'

"And, out of consideration for Brewer, we packed and pulled out."

CHAPTER TWO

THE MAKING OF A COWBOY

The trials of a tenderfoot cowboy on the plains in the early '70's were only exceeded by the trials of such of them as survived their apprenticeship with enough hardihood left to become tenderfoot ranchmen. One not only caught it going and coming, but often got it hardest when neither going nor coming. And the harder one got it the greater the kindness to him; if his metal rang true under test, the sooner was he accepted into the grim and more or less grizzled Order of Old Timers; if it rang false, the quicker was he brought to a realisation that for him the plains offered little of opportunity save a chance to split the scenery along the shortest trail East. Neither breeding, brains, nor money counted among the nervy nomads of the range. It was make good or make tracks.

And for the best man it was far from easy to make good. The sudden transition from the ease and luxuries of civilisation to the hard riding, hard fare, and hard bed of a cowboy was trying, to say the least.

At high noon of a beautiful June day, the Overland Express pulled me into Cheyenne, Wyoming, and out of it I stepped into an atmosphere with a nip in it that set one's blood tingling

like a glass of champagne. Out of it I stepped, a youngster not yet of age, bent to be a cowboy.

Before leaving the train, I had prudently strapped to my waist a new (how distressingly new) ·45 Colt's six-shooter, that looked and felt a yard long. The one possession larger than this pistol that left the train with me was my desire to learn to use it, for I then suspected, and a few days later proved, that it was idle for me to hope to hit with it anything in the landscape smaller than the heavens above or the earth beneath me. In fact, for several months the safest thing in my neighbourhood was whatever I tried to shoot at with that pistol, safer even than I myself who held it; for, until I learned its tricks, the recoil at each discharge gave me a smash in the forehead, from hammer or barrel, that made me wish I had been the target instead of the marksman.

At the station I was met by dear old N. R. Davis, the hardest of taskmasters on a tenderfoot quitter, and the best of mentors and friends to a stayer.

While I brought a letter of commendation from his partner and my best friend, Clarence King, he could not help showing that I lacked his approval. Nor was he to be blamed. Two years before a tussle of several weeks with a brain fever, immediately succeeding six months of exceptionally hard work while in charge of the New York *Tribune's* verbatim report of the Henry Ward Beecher trial, had left me very much of a physical wreck, and I dare say I looked to him better fit to hold down a hospital cot than to fork a cayuse.

Then there was my regalia!

For my own condition doubtless he had a latent sympathy, but my rig incited his open resentment. The rig I had taken so much time in selecting and felt so proud of he quickly consigned to the scrap heap—lace boots, little knee leggings, short hunting spurs, little round soft hat; everything, indeed,

but my pistol. And even the pistol had to be stripped of its flap holster and rehabited in the then new decolleté Olive scabbard.

The early afternoon was spent in assembling a proper outfit. A bridle, forty-pound saddle, forty-foot rawhide lariat, California spurs with two-inch rowels and leather chaps that, when I got them on, felt like they weighed a ton, and made me look like I weighed ten pounds, were bought at Frank Menea's; a tarpaulin, a buffalo robe and two blankets for my camp bed, boots and a big hat John Harrington furnished.

And then, fortified by two toddies at Luke Murrain's, which N. R. had evidently suggested from motives of sheer humanity, we climbed into his buckboard, forded Crow Creek, and bowled away south for his Owl Creek ranch, behind a span of half-broke half-breeds that spent as little time on the ground and as much up in the air as their harness handicap permitted.

At that time N. R. had the finest horse ranch and best-bred horses in all Wyoming, a herd than headed by the famous old thoroughbred stallion Huerfano, loved the game of conquering and training them, and never drove a gentle pair if he could help it; humoured his mad pets when he could, rough handled them when he must to maintain mastery, and never was he happier than when, straining on the reins, before him plunged a savage pair, eyes bloodshot, lathered flanks heaving, tails switching, manes tossing, muscles surging, cruel heels flying toward his face, in a nip and tuck struggle where it was his neck and their freedom or their bondage and his mastery.

There was little talk on the drive; the pair kept him too busy, and concern about what part of my anatomy might first hit the ground kept me thinking. Half way or more out he spoke:

" Wonder if Kingy had it in for you or me, letting you come out here ? I guess for both of us—thought we'd both be sure to get it, but mind, I'm not going to favour you. You've got to take your medicine with Con Humphrey's outfit, and he's about as tough a rawhide as ever led a circle. But he always gets there, and that's the only reason I keep him. It's lay close to old Con's flank, Kid, and keep your end up or turn in your string of horses. On the round-up no soldiering goes ; sick or well, it's hit yourself in the flank with your hat and keep up with the bunch or be set afoot to pack your saddle ; there's no room in the chuck wagon for a quitter's blankets, and no time to close herd sick ones. So for Heaven's sake don't start out unless you have the guts to stand it."

While far short of encouraging, it was, nevertheless, plain that N. R.'s every word was conceived in kindness. So I simply answered that while I would of course prove unhandy at the new work, he could rely that the moment I found I could not keep out of the way of the experienced punchers, I would myself want to turn in my horses and quit the outfit. Then he resumed :

" I'm tally-branding this summer, making a tally or inventory of all our cattle and horses for an accounting and settlement with my partners. The corrals are full of cattle it will take all day to-morrow to run through the chutes and hair-brand. The next morning Con starts his outfit down Willow to round up the Pawnee Butte country. I'll pass you up to Con to-night, and what he makes of the new hand will depend on what he finds in it. We'll dump your blankets and tricks at the chuck wagon, and you can make down among the boys. Earlier you start the sooner you'll learn—and that, I guess, is what you're here for. Don't mind the boys. They'll rough you a lot, but most of it will

be good-humoured. If any get ugly, you'll have to call them down, that's all."

A little after dark we reached the ranch, a big, comfortable frame house with wide piazzas, through whose windows I caught glimpses of snowy linen and gleaming silver and cut glass in a cheerful dining-room, that made a picture of comfort and luxury, and told a story of generous feeding, that for the next thirty days was seldom long out of my mind.

At the back of the handsome ranch house stood a little log cabin, now the winter home of N. D. (the Davis brand) punchers, that told of humble beginnings five years before.

A few hundred feet south of the house stood the stables, and near these a bunch of great corrals, built of "grout"—solid walls of mortar and gravel.

This was all—no pasture, no fences, just the broad prairies rolling away in all directions to the horizon.

Past ranch and corrals tinkled Owl Creek, a little brook one could step across, that struck me as the most pathetic bit of water I then had ever seen. Born of a tiny spring that feebly pushed its way into the sunlight from beneath a low bluff a scant half mile west of the ranch, a spring bubbling with the mirth and singing with the joy of release from its subterranean prison, happy in the generous bounty it had to bestow upon this arid land, wondering, like any other young thing, what lay beyond its horizon, and eager to hurry on and see, the last precious drops of Owl Creek's sweet waters were soon greedily drunk by the thirsting plains, gone back into Mother Earth's deep bosom whence they had so recently come, and its career ended, a scant half mile east of the ranch!

There was so much Owl Spring wanted to do, and so little it did. It slaked the thirst of a few men and beasts; one slender cottonwood, frail as the mother that fed it, bent

affectionately over the spring; two narrow ribbons of juicy green grasses owed life to the spring and followed it faithfully to its end: that was all.

Forever shut within its narrow horizon though Owl Spring was, fated never to know fellow waters and merrily to wander with them out into the world, nevertheless it was spared all contamination and was privileged to sink to its last rest as clean and pure as when its first rippling smile received the sun's first kiss.

A merry fire blazed at the tail end of the chuck wagon. About it were sitting sixteen punchers, feeding from tin plates and cups, gorging on beans, beef, and baking-powder biscuits, washed down with coffee strong enough to float an egg, men with the ferocious hunger of the wolf, and the case-hardened stomach of the ostrich. They were of all ages from sixteen to sixty, but most of them under thirty, all grimy with the dust, and several reeking with the blood of the day's work in the corrals.

It was plain I was downright welcome to the bunch, but in a way that boded anything but good for me. While no life of greater privation and hardship than the cowboy's ever existed, unless that in the forecastle of a wind jammer, no merrier, jollier lot ever lived, always "joshing" each other, turning a jest on every condition in life, from the cradle to the grave, but one—home and mammy, a subject on which tones always lowered, eyes softened and sometimes grew misty.

A glance about the circle explained the warmth of my welcome. I was the only tenderfoot in camp! Thus the odds were sixteen to one. I was in for trouble, and it was not long coming.

I nearly stalled at the rude fare, and ate little.

"Kid," drawled Tobacco Jake, "ef you reckons to tote

that full grown gun all day to-morrow, yu better ile yer jints with sow belly an' fill up all th' holler places inside yu with beans an' biscuit; yu shore look like yu hadn't had no man's grub in a month."

I replied I had been something of an invalid, and that it was true my physical condition was hardly up to par.

"Look yere, Kid," replied Jake, "ef yu caint talk our langwidge, you jus make signs. What'n hell yu tryin' to say, anyway?"

Before I could reply, Jack Talbot cut in:

"He shore do look like a doggie" (a motherless calf) "'t haint got used t' eatin' grass. Gee, but won't the beans rattle in his craw when he climbs his first bronc! 'Bout two jumps an' a twist an' I allow he'll jes nachally fall t' pieces, 'n' we'll have t' bunch th' *re*-mains in a war sack 'n' send 'em t' his ma."

"Bet you my gun agin yer silver trimmed spade bit th' fust jump fetches him, an' it's us t' pick up th' chips," cheerfully suggested Jake.

"Wouldn't let him fork one o' my top cutters bareback fer nuthin'," was the pleasantly impersonal comment of Llano Lew, "he's so ga'nted up an' thin he'd give it worse saddle galls than airy ole horse-eatin' Mexico tree 't ever crossed th' Rio Grand."

Another happy thought struck Jake, and out it came:

"Say, fellers, I allow his folks w'd sort a like to plant him in th' fam'ly stiff lot, but they shore won't be willin' to be set back much payin' freight on his busted carcass. Le's see ef we-uns caint he'p 'em out. When he do come apart, le's see ef we caint load him in his own gun—looks like he'd jes about chamber in her—'n' jes nachally shoot him back whar he cum from, 'n' save um th' *ex*-press price."

These were only a few of the more refined and agreeable

sallies that greeted me my first evening in cow camp. In fact, I was beginning to get pretty hot in the collar, when at length a friendly voice spoke, that of Tex, a man I soon learned to trust, and later to love, who through many years stood as steadfastly my friend as on this night of the little tenderfoot's first trials.

"Fellers," he quietly observed, "jest shet y'r yawp, pronto! Let the kid alone—it's me sayin' it. Course he ain't goin' to keep up with no leaders on th' circle, but I've got a fool idee he won't be so fer behind we'll lose him none."

I was the subject of no more open comments that night, but until the last pair were asleep there were whispers and snickers that left no doubt they were still having their fun at my expense.

By dawn the next morning we were routed out by the cook, and by good sun-up had finished breakfast and were in the corrals for the day's work at tally-branding.

The great pens were filled with wild range cattle, the gather of the last round-up, old and young. The golden duns, pale yellows, light reds and piebald black and whites, all with great, wide-spreading horns characteristic of the old Spanish stock of southern Texas, predominated, with here and there the short horns, dark red and greater bulk of a Durham cross, the bald face of a Hereford, or the hornless head and solid black colour of a Polled Angus.

And wild indeed they were, looked and acted it—eyes blazing, horns shaking threateningly, surging back and forth across the corral, sometimes in solid mass, an irresistible tide stopped only by the heavy walls of the pen, sometimes moving in winding counter currents like the waters of an eddy, bulls bellowing, cows lowing, steers snorting, calves "blatting," a mass of colour shifting and brilliant as any ever seen in a kaleidoscope.

And into this sea of tossing horns it was ours to jump and work all day—on foot!

And jump it was all day, and keep your eyes about.

A fire was quickly lighted, and the branding-irons laid in it, heating for their cruel task.

Along one side of the corral ran a narrow chute long enough to hold twenty animals, standing heads to tails, the outer end opening on the prairie, the inner on a close-pen thirty feet in diameter.

This close-pen was filled with cattle from the main corral, driven in by the dismounted punchers, yelling and swinging clubs or anything we could lay our hands on.

Then from this pen the chute was filled, the rear end barred, and in five minutes two or three men handling the irons had lightly hair-branded the imprisoned beasts, the outer gate was opened, and they were released, bounding out to freedom, bawling from the pain of the iron.

And, bar an hour for dinner at midday, so this round was repeated till nearly dark, when the corrals were emptied.

While no work could be harder, and few tasks involve less of ever-present momentary peril to limb or life, while the foreman was a mean, ill-natured brute, often needlessly exacting, cursing at a moment's pause in the work, and cordially hated by all, while begrimed and often half-blinded by dust and smoke and sweat, never have I seen schoolboys merrier at their play, fuller of jests, pranks, and rough horse-play than were these cow-punchers at their work.

In mid-afternoon my friend, Tobacco Jake, near met his finish. While working over the chute, a great bull made a savage dig at him, the dull, rounded point of one horn landing on Jake's jaw, fracturing it and laying him out so stiff we thought for some time he was surely done for.

The trend of sympathy was expressed by Llano Lew:

"Pow'ful hard luck on Jake, bustin' his talk box. Reckon he'd ruther stay daid 'n' come to ef he knowed it. 'N' ef he do stay daid, he shore won't make no very d——d sociable ghost, onless he meet up with sperits 't knows Injun sign-talk."

All day long I had been getting a continuous "joshing"—mock sympathy for my weakness and feigned anxiety for my safety: if an angry beast charged my way, one or more of the boys would push me aside and take my place, while others strove to turn the charge; when it came in my way to pick up anything from the ground, no matter how insignificantly small and light, one or more pair of hands were instantly reached out to help me lift it, and when my face was observed streaming with sweat, one or another would solicitously try to wipe it with the slack of a loose bandana neckerchief.

By evening my *amour propre* was downright raw, and I was resolved to make the first play that offered to lift myself in my mates' esteem. Just at the close of the day's work the chance came.

As, through the late afternoon, the numbers in the main corral rapidly dwindled until few were left, with more room to run, and evidently made nervous by watching the mass of the herd streaming through the chute to the liberty of the open range, those remaining became more and more restive, and, as the boys put it, "*hosstile*." One in particular, a lean, active white two-year-old heifer, the foreman had seriously warned all of us to watch carefully.

And when at length we sought to drive the last little lot of them into the close-pen, all entered safely, after two or three trials, except this white heifer, which charged back through our yelling, arm-swinging line of punchers, that quickly broke to right and left at her approach, many not stopping short of the top of the fence, a proceeding that struck

me as wholly undignified. It also seemed unnecessary, for each swung in his hands a stout club of some sort, heavy enough to stun or turn her, if rightly landed.

My hand weapon was a straight-blade, short-handled spade, and I quickly formed what seemed to me the sound piece of strategy of awaiting her charge (if she came at me) until the last second, and then leaping aside and dropping her with a blow between the horns. Run from her I resolved I would not.

Repeatedly we lined up and crowded her up to the gate, where she would stand an instant, angrily lashing her tail, and then whirl and charge, the boys scattering out of her course.

Presently I got what—I had *thought*—I wanted ; she charged me straight.

Quickly swinging the spade over my shoulder for the blow, and shifting my feet slightly in a gather for the leap aside, I slipped on the now muddy ground and fell flat on my back, dropping the spade in the effort to recover myself !

And no more was I down than the heifer was upon me, head lowered and sharp horns pointed for the *coup de mort* of her race. But, surprised by my fall, she braced her forefeet when a little distance from me, and literally slid through the mud up to me till her two hoofs gave me a pretty good dig in the ribs, then backed away two or three feet, then muzzled my body and face in inquiry and lightly prodded me with her horns for any sign of life. Lying motionless, through half-closed lids I plainly saw the fury in her eyes soften with wonder and curiosity however I could have gone dead so quickly—and then she lightly leaped across my body and was gone !

And nobody called me slow in reaching and mounting to the security of the nearest fence top !

It all happened so quickly I actually hadn't time to get scared or even nervous until after it was all over—and such as I then felt the boys quickly knocked out of me with their jests.

"Hoot! lad," called Red Cameron, the cook, "but Auld Hornie nigh got ye the whiles, hot off the eend o' his own kind o' weepons. Gi'n ye had as muckle sense as luck, ye'd get yer eemortality in this wurrld, by livin' forever!"

Then Llano Lew:

"Mama! but who'd a thot th' kid was locoed enough t' tackle a fightin' heifer afoot? His thinker must shore be as puny as his carcass. Ain't nuthin' but him 'tween th' two Plattes fool enough t' tackle thataway a lightweight two-year-old hell bent for trouble, like Miss Blanco thar. D——d ef we don't have t' neck him t' th' cook t' keep 'im from killin' his fool self 'fore we hits the Pawnee."

And again good old Tex to my aid:

"You jes tighten th' latigo on that jaw o' yourn. 'Pears t' me like th' kid's got a tol'able heavy jag o' sand mixt with his loco, uv a brand a hell uv a sight better'n yourn, Lew. Better see ef ye caint git to trade him some o' yer tongue ile fer some o' his sand. D——d ef I don't think he's got right smart t' spare, 'n' still stack up with airy puncher in th' pen."

A kindly sentiment that won some adherents in the bunch, as shown by some awkward but friendly advances.

That night beans and biscuit tasted good to me, and the lumpy mattress of buffalo grass felt better.

The next morning I turned out rather stiff from my first day's work, and a bit sore from Miss Blanco's hoofs and horns, but otherwise fit as a fiddle.

Breakfast over, in twenty minutes camp kettles, war sacks and beds were loaded into the chuck wagon, horses caught and

saddled, and we were mounted and headed south-east for Willow Creek.

N. R. had assigned me a string of five horses, all kind and gentle, and unusually good ones, I later realised, to entrust to a tenderfoot.

Average hands were never assigned less than four horses each for range round-up work, and top hands who had the heavy work of "cutting" the round-ups, separating the cattle wanted from those not wanted, rarely less than seven or eight horses. And there were never too many horses, seldom enough. Lacking corn and all other fodder but the native grasses, it was only by frequent change of mounts and long intervals of rest for each that they could be kept in fair flesh, strong of wind and limb and sound of back. In the saddle from dawn to dark, and then riding a two to three hours' turn at night guard round the herd in hand, fifty to seventy miles a day was no more than an average distance daily covered by the average cowboy on the round-up; and throughout a third to sometimes more than half the day the pace was the ponies' top speed, handling and turning wild cattle bent on escape.

Thus by the noon finish of a morning circle sides were lathered, flanks drawn, strength and wind gone, and fresh mounts necessary, while during the afternoon's work of "cutting" the herd, the pace was so killing for the top cutters, with the terrible shock of sudden sharp turns and short stops, that one or two changes were always desirable.

This first day in the saddle on the open range was a tough one on the tenderfoot. The easiest saddle on the rider in the world once you are used to it, the cow saddle is far harder to get on comfortable terms with than the flat pigskin; it gives a beginner harder cramps and tenderer spots in more parts of the anatomy than any punishment conceivable short of an

inquisition rack. Thus by midday every part of me ached cruelly, and by night I was so stiff and numb that, when dismounted every step was agony.

And by that time I had acquired an even greater mental than bodily agony. The plains through which we rode were simply alive with great rattlesnakes, some coiled comfortably beneath the shade of a greasewood or prickly pear, some stretched lazily in the sun, some crawling about, all alert for mischief, quick to coil, rattle and strike at whatever approached them, forked tongues thrusting maliciously, poison fangs gleaming like two miniature cimeters.

All day long we were scarcely ever ten minutes out of sight of them.

How any living thing contrived to exist within reach of those thousands of ever-ready envenomed fangs was past understanding.

To ride among them was bad enough, but nothing to the horror of dismounting among them, while the thought of lying down in one's blankets at night within their jealously held territory was too hideous a hazard to contemplate.

And all day long, when not too busy roasting my seat in the saddle, the boys were spinning to each other yarns, conceived for the occasion, of a mate awakened to find a rattler coiled upon his breast, of another bitten from beneath the ambush of a shrub when bending to picket his horse, of yet another slipping into a cave alive with them—each dying, of course, in tortures painted as fearsomely as they knew.

Indeed, the active actual peril from the rattlers was at noon emphasised. When, our dinner finished, Nigger Dick, the horse wrangler, brought in the loose horses to the wagon, some one noted him sucking his thumb and asked him what was the matter.

"Done got stung by Br'er Rattler! Seed a li'l young

cottontail an' allowed I c'd cotch him, but hit done run me ober de prickly pears 'n' 'roun' greasewood patches twell my ole tongue wuz haingin' out, 'n' then hit up 'n' duv inta a hole jes es I wuz goin' t' drap on hit. Yassa, I was sho' clus atop o' Br'er Rabbit, so clus I runs my fool nigga airm into de hole, spectin' t' get hit's hind paws, but staid o' that, Br'er Rattler what was layin' thar, jes riz up f'm his noon ear-poundin', 'n' pow'ful mad at Br'er Rabbit fer kickin' him in de haid, he jes nails me good on de fo' paw, 'n' when I jerks away, out paht way he comes twell one o' his old toofs slips out 'n' th' otha one she jes bruck off 'n' stay stickin' in Dick's fumb. But I shore dug him out 'n' bruck him apaht, 'foh I quit! 'N' all de time, I 'lows, Br'er Rabbit wuz sittin' deepa down de hole alafin' at Dick. Hell! but hit do hu't!"

And indeed his hand and arm were already badly swollen. Promptly one of the boys drew the bullet from a pistol cartridge, took a knife and deeply gashed, almost hashed, the thumb all about the two tiny punctures, then poured the powder over the wound and fired it with a match! A crude method of cauterising, it certainly seemed effective. Anyway, whether due to Dick's sucking his thumb or to the rude cowboy surgery, the inflammation went no further and Dick made a quick recovery.

That night it took more nerve to lie down in my blankets in rattler land than I had needed the day before to face Miss Blanco!

But as matter of fact, as I later learned—so much later it did me no good on this trip—rattlers are never night prowlers on the plains, and "hole up" so soon as the chill of night comes on; and indeed now, after years on the range, Dick remains the only man I ever personally knew bitten by a rattler.

On this rodeo we were out about a month, rounding up

first the Crow Creek and Pawnee Butte country, thence swinging up the South Platte River to Fremont's Orchard, thence to the sink of Willow Creek and up Willow towards the home ranch.

The first forty-eight hours I developed an appetite and a capacity for sleep never known before.

In a week I was fairly hardened to sixteen to eighteen hours a day in the saddle, most of the time on the jump.

In a fortnight I had accomplished a modest but certain entry into the mysteries of brands, ear-marks, "dulaps," "wattles," etc.

At the end of three weeks I could pitch and swing a riata tolerably, and, notwithstanding sundry more or less hard falls incident to unwary steps in prairie dog holes, running over calves, cowboy's tricks, etc., had acquired a four-year old, full-grown faith in my saddle seat.

And it was precisely for this latter I had been waiting and working hardest. For the boys' "joshing" never ceased—I was too good a thing to miss.

The favourite subject of their jests and tricks was my early awkwardness and insecurity in the saddle, a fact they easily proved by the simple experiment of sticking a prickly pear bulb beneath my horse's tail after I had mounted. While, of course, the trick was always played behind my back, I was never long in discovering it. Instantly the horse began bucking furiously to lose the pear, and always finished by losing me first. As a "pear buster" I was a dismal failure, but as a side-splitter for the boys I was a howling success.

But all the time I was learning more of the knee and lower leg grip, the balance and "swing" needful to keep rider and bucker from parting company—till presently one day, early the fourth week, I resolved to make a play that, win or lose,

could not fail to largely stop the galling chaff I was getting so tired of.

An " outlaw " is a horse fuller of years than honours, spoiled by needless cruelty in the early breaking, spoiled so completely that he is " bad " to the end of his days, either as bucker, kicker, striker, biter, backfaller, etc., and usually master of all these accomplishments, a fighter in one or all of these ways every time he is saddled.

" Walkingbars " was freely conceded to be the worst outlaw in the N. D. outfit, a great yellow-eyed, Roman-nosed, ewe-necked, long-barrelled, heavy-quartered buckskin. Every trick of the evil equine " Walkingbars " knew, and he had the power to do these tricks longer and harder than any horse I have ever since seen.

When " Walkingbars " got down to earnest pitching it seemed—and usually proved—as hard to stop him as to stay the mighty swing of a side-wheeler's walking-beam—and hence, I dare say, his name.

" Walkingbars " was in the mount of a wiry little Mexican, José, who managed to handle him, but was tired of the task and constantly cursing him.

I decided to add " Walkingbars " to my mount.

He might and probably would do a lot of things to me, but nothing I dreaded more than " Tenderfoot," and the chaff and tricks that went with the name, and it was to shake these annoyances at one stroke that, one morning on the circle, I proposed to trade José my top horse, " Goldie," for " Walkingbars."

" *Madre de Dios! muchacho*, he keela you, keela you sure; but if you weesh, you heem have, *y que Dios te aguarda!* "

So the trade was settled, José promising to say nothing of it to the boys.

When, therefore, at the noon camp, the horses were run

into the rope pen, made of lariats outstretched from the chuck wagon wheels, and I pitched my rope over " Walkingbar's " head and dragged him out of the bunch, there was a profound sensation.

" Now, Tender," called Llano Lew, " yu shore ha' raised hell droppin' y'r string on ole 'Bars ! How'n hell yu reckon yu goin' t' git loose fore he cotches an' swallers yu ? 'N' then how'n hell we-uns goin' t' get yu' pesky little pusson outen him ? "

And all the time old " 'Bars " was surging on the rope and dragging me about, snorting, rearing, and striking. Just then I myself would have been glad to know of some way to get loose with some shred of dignity, but the play was made and had to be finished.

It took a lot of time and patience, and nearly wore me out, but finally I worked up the rope hand over hand, until dodging his strikes, I succeeded in slipping a half-hitch over his nose, and then there was another long tussle before I could approach him. When at length I again got in arm's reach, I began gingerly to rub his nose, scratch his head, and pat his neck, and—wonder of wonders—he actually stood still, apparently in sheer astonishment to meet a puncher that neither yelled at, struck, nor jerked him !

Presently I got a lump of sugar in his mouth—and then a second. It tasted good, and the wicked eyes glared less balefully, the nervous ears drooped lazily, the resentful muscles relaxed, and old " 'Bars " stood quietly at ease !

Then I softly slipped my bridle from the back of my belt, slowly approached it to his head, gently, very gently, pressed the tongue of the bit into the side of his mouth, and he received it (along with another lump of sugar !), and a moment later I had the headstall over his ears.

" Walkingbars " stood bridled, a trick never accomplished

by José himself, in the rough way he went at it, until after a hard ten to fifteen minutes' fight.

And the explanation was easy. Old " 'Bars " was simply stunned with wonder to find a puncher who didn't try to jam his teeth down his throat with the cruel bit steel: why shouldn't he let such have his will?

Then came the saddle, and it took a lot of diplomacy and time to place and cinch it, for old " 'Bars " was handy with whirling kicks, one of which would cave one's chest in.

Once during the saddling he came out of his trance and fought me, but with patience and more patting—and another lump of sugar—he was again quieted till the saddling was finished and I had him safely tied to a wagon wheel.

Approval was frank and profanely emphatic.

" Wal! I'll be good —— —— to ——," remarked Jack Talbot, " ef that don' beat th' Comanches. Th' kid shore must have pow'ful Injun medicine, 'ts too strong fer ole ' 'Bars.' I'd a neve' believed the' was airy puncher 'tween th' Gulf an' Canidy could bridle an' saddle ole ' 'Bars ' thataway, 'thout fitin' him all ove' a five-acre lot."

" An' we be'n callin' of yu ' Tende ' !

" Ef yu was willin' t' shake with me, Mistah Kid, I would conside' hit a honou'," and we shook, " fo' yu shorely has a medicine bag fo' outlaws hid out about yu pusson that 'd make Jeff Gerry or th' Pinneos look like plough pushers. But, fo' th' love o' home an' mammy, yu *don'* allow t' climb that ole yaller hell-twister, does yu? His naick's too long fo' yu t' get t' whispa' in his ea', like yu be'n doin', 'n' ef he forgits th' purtys yu be'n promisin' him, yu can bet yu'r *alce* no roll, or stirrup tyin', or leather grabin' 'll keep yu from gettin' throwed so fur it 'll take yu a week t' walk back to camp, ef yu has any sound bones left t' walk on."

And when, a half hour later, I led out old " 'Bars," after-

first secretly slipping him yet another bit of sugar, while the boys sat their horses at a little distance, coiled my rope and held the loose coils in my left hand, seized reins and headstall with the left, and gently bent old " 'Bars's " head toward me, and then caught stirrup, grabbed saddle-horn, and swung slowly into the saddle and quietly fastened my rope with the horn string, a wild yell of approval rose from the boys that was near being my undoing.

Till it came " Walkingbars " had stood perfectly quiet, but a cowboy yell was old " 'Bars's " tocsin of war, and for a time it broke the spell of my " medicine," and came near smashing me.

He lit into such bucking as I had never dreamed I could stand a second, but, hooking spurs in cinch and pulling leather ignominiously, I contrived to stay on him for perhaps a dozen jumps, when lo, a miracle! Suddenly he stopped stock still, bent his neck and gazed back in my face with a " that's-the-sugar-cup-and-I-better-not-break-it " look in his eyes.

And when I lightly shook the reins, he quietly trotted up to the waiting group of boys.

As I joined them, I heard Tex remark:

" Lew, does yu allow it's loco or sense an' sand th' Kid's sufferin' most from ? "

CHAPTER THREE

THE TENDERFOOT'S TRIALS

After the conquest—for the time being, at least, complete —of " Walkingbars," the worst outlaw bronco in the N. D. brand, I felt the crisis of my trials as a tenderfoot was passed. But this proved erroneous—widely.

Most of the punchers hailed my success with " Walking-bars " with satisfaction, and showed me a cordiality that made me feel that I had at least one foot drawn out of the slough of tenderfootdom.

But one man seemed actually to resent my good fortune —the evil-tempered foreman, Con Humphreys. He may not have wanted me killed outright, but he certainly did seem to want to see me more or less maimed or disfigured. Indeed, the only thing that made at all endurable his general mental attitude toward the outfit at large and each puncher in particular, was the fact that he seemed to hate himself quite as cordially as he did the rest of us. His was a mirthless life, devoid even of any sense of pleasure except when engaged in inflicting some needless cruelty he judged could not be resented.

Already Humphreys had been stacking me up against the toughest and some of the riskiest tasks of round-up work; tasks to try the skill and nerve of the oldest rawhide of them all; and when, as often happened, I acquitted myself none too well, he sneered at and abused me all he dared with a protégé of his boss, N. R.

The very morning after I first saddled and rode " Walking-bars," and it had begun to dawn upon his shrewd equine brain that it paid well to curb his savage temper and permit mastery to a puncher who handled him gently and spoke to him kindly, Con's malignant disposition cropped out anew.

When out an hour from the lower Willow corral, the herd in hand strung out a mile or more along the winding trail up-stream, a many-tinted ribbon of bright colour moving ever forward across the endless rolling sea of pale yellow buffalo grass, seen upon the hillocks and disappearing in the swales, the little Mexican, José, rode back into the dense dust clouds at the rear of the herd, where, with two others, I was

shouting and pounding along the " drags "—the lame, the lazy, the footsore, and the young—altogether the rottenest task about a moving herd, and asked :

" Keed, you see ol' ' 'Bars ' thees mornin' ? "

" No," I answered.

" You go *remouda* looka heem ; I teks you place few meenits, *latigando estos diablos de muertos.*"

So I loped over to the *remouda* a few hundred yards away, where the horse wrangler was slowly drifting and grazing his charges.

As usual, old " 'Bars " was well out on the flank of the bunch, flocking by his lonesome. And it needed only a glance to note that his *jacemo* had been removed.

The *jacemo* is a stout headstall made of horsehair, then always used in bronco breaking and handling, either instead of, or in connection with, a bridle. With only a riata loop about a bronco's neck he could drag one about corral or over prairie for half an hour before you could pretend to try to place a saddle, but with the end of a riata fastened to the loop of a *jacemo's* nose-band, every pull meant stronger smothering pressure over his nostrils, and he soon ceased steady heavy pull on the rope.

Usually after a few days' handling the *jacemo* was no longer necessary with the average bronco, but with old " 'Bars " it could never be dispensed with. Without one on his head it was utterly impossible to bridle and saddle him, and to put a *jacemo* on him needed that he be roped by the forelegs and thrown, and " hog-tied "—his four feet bunched and lashed fast together with half-hitches, helpless—a job evidently yet far beyond me.

Who could have played me the foul trick of removing " 'Bars's " headstall I could not fancy — unless Con himself.

I hurried back to the " drags " and questioned José. He answered :

" *Inmediatamente* bafo' we leev de camp, I see *ese diablo* Con cut heem off. Ef I you, I shoot hell out heem pronto an' go on scout. You say *si*, I halp you, me ! "

José meant it, every word, for he, next to me, had been most frequently a victim of Con's meanness. But I merely thanked him, asked him to keep my place with the drags till my return, and trotted forward where Tex rode in the lead swing, a couple of hundred yards behind Con's position on the left point of the herd.

Good old Tex heard my story and my statement that I saw nothing for it but to call Con down or turn in my string of horses and quit the outfit, and then softly drawled :

" Kid, it is shore up to yu t' go on th' prod. Horn him wi' th' meanest cuss words yu knows, 'specially 'bout his closest kin folk, 'n' tell him if he monkeys wi' yu o' yu string agin yu'll hang his skelp on yu lodge pole. Ef he bats a eye o' makes airy move fo' his gun, *git* him, 'n' do it pow'ful quick. Cou'se you caint shoot none sudden like him, so yu jes stay 's clus t' him 's if yu was sittin' up wi' yu best gal, 'n' th' fust move he makes yu jerks yu gun 'n' bends her good 'n' plenty ove' that misshaped co'kee'nut he we'as en place o' a haid, 'n' then yu bend her back straight wi' anotha lick. I'll sorta drift along afte' yu, 'thin easy gun range, 'n' ef he gets yu, Kid, it'll be th' last gun game he'll git to ante in, 'n' then it'll be Tex fer th' scout. But we'll make her a squar' play ; I won't chip in 'fore yu're down."

This cheering proposal was inspired in part, no doubt, by a growing friendship for me, but largely by a profound dislike for the foreman.

I rode forward to Con. Hearing my approach, he looked back with an ugly scowl, and called :

"What'n hell you doin' here, you or'nery kid? Didn't I leave you along o' the drags 'n' doggies yu belongs with?"

"Yes, Humphreys, you did," I replied, "and I'm ready to try to do my best at whatever job you put me on, but I'm up here now to tell you you've got to quit your abuse; quit your tricks with my string of horses and limit your dealings with me to plain orders in the regular line of work."

For a minute or two he was silent with astonishment. Then he burst out:

"What'n damnation yu kickin' about now, yu——"

"Cut out the description or settle here, Con," I interrupted. "I specially refer to your cutting the *jacemo* off 'Bars' this morning."

"Huh! Did *yu* see it done?"

"No, but others did," I answered.

"Wal," he snarled, "whoever says I done it 's a d——n liar."

"You'll not tell José that," I suggested.

He straightened in the saddle, shortened rein, tightened knee grip, and truculently growled:

"Wal, s'pose I did, what'n hell you goin' to do about it? Blat t' old N. R., I reckon!"

"No, Con, nothing of the sort. You're going to order the men to throw 'Bars' at the noon camp, and put on him a new *jacemo*, and you're going to settle with me for any new outrage you try to play; it'll be just the two of us," and I lightly touched my spur to my pony's side, and moved him up till my right knee was nearly touching his left, within the easy reach of his "cocoanut" as Tex had advised.

For full two minutes, I should think, we sat gazing into each other's eyes, every muscle tense and sense alert, he studying whether to venture upon offence, I intent to draw

and strike before he could draw and shoot. The position was perfect for my plan, for his head was defenceless against a blow except by releasing his bridle rein, leaving his horse momentarily unmanageable, or by spurring away from me, and against the latter move I was hedging by readiness to plunge my spurs into my horse's flank.

A face fuller of malice and murder I never confronted; big-eared and peaked like a wolf's, but shifty-eyed and currish as a coyote, a face conveying no fear of a frontal attack, but promising large hazard of ambush; the face of an assassin, but not of a fighter.

Still the provocation, from his stand-point, was great, and had wrought in him a rage nigh impossible to curb.

Presently the near-by neigh of a horse behind him caused him to quickly turn his head—to see old Tex idly sitting his horse seventy-five yards away, his ·44 Winchester plainly loosened and partly drawn from the scabbard, his right hand caressing the stock, apparently watching the moving herd but at an angle that left us well within the tail of his eye.

Instantly he realised Tex had either scented trouble or been told of it, and was there to pot him on the slightest excuse.

Then the hard lines of his face relaxed, and, with a surly grin, he spoke:

"Why, Kid, 'pears t' me yu're pow'ful het up over nothin'. O' cou'se takin' off 'Bars's' sombrero was part jest a joke 'n' part t' see ef yu couldn't put her back on agin wi' one o' them big medicine plays yu worked on 'Bars' yestiddy. I 'lowed you'd admire a chanct t' put it all ove' th' boys by nachally talkin' ole 'Bars' intu beggin' th' priv'lege o' wearin' a new bunnet. O' cou'se ef yu 'lows yu medicine ain't that strong, we'll throw th' ole —— an' slap her on fer yu. 'N' as fer roughin' o' yu, why hell! ef yu had half th'

sense yu 'pear t' pack 'n' that little nut o' yurn, yu'd see I ben tryin' Con's best t' give yu a show for th' biggest punche' honahs 'n' t' make yu a top hand pronto. But it do shore look like yu don't 'preciate it, leavin' th' drinks on Con 'n' th' chamberin' o' them on yu! Bet yur *alce* from now on yu can larn by yur lonesome, fir's I'm consarned."

And he rode forward where, at his neglected "point," the herd was spreading out like a fan, contentedly grazing.

I turned back toward the "drags" and Tex rode with me half-way down the long line of the herd.

"Allus knew he was a coyote," commented Tex; "throws too many John Branch ranicaboo bluffs o' his own t' call any one else's. He'll jest rar' up on his haind laigs 'n' come at yu wi' his mouth open like he were th' Whale 'n' yu Jonah, 'n' the fust flutter yu gives he shuts his face hard 'nough t' bust his nut crackers 'n' drops on all fou's 'n' scoots for th' nearest bunch o' brush. T' hell wi' such *ani*miles anyway; they shore do make my—back tired!"

Thus relieved, Tex reined west and rode to his place in the "swing."

When at the noon camp the horses were run into the ropes for catching the afternoon mounts, Con called:

"Tex, drop yu twine on 'Bars,' 'n' Llano, 'n' Jack, yu-all he'p him throw 'n' tie 'Bars' 'n' git his haid intu my *jacemo*."

Tex pitched his rope over "'Bars's" head, snubbed the end of the rope about his hips, and as "'Bars" bounded out of the ropes, braced feet forward and body back for the tug. Notwithstanding the severe choking of the riata noose about his neck, with all Tex's weight and strength straining at the other end of the rope, mad old "'Bars" dragged his captor about the prairie at almost racing speed a good ten minutes before Llano could get within casting reach to noose his forefeet. Then with a sharp pull to the left by Tex and

to the right by Llano, down smash on his side fell the equine warrior, and before he could gather Tex had a knee on his neck, a hand smothering his nostrils, and his muzzle turned skyward, while Llano had thrown a quick half-hitch over his left hind foot, and drawn it up tightly against the noose that bound the forefeet.

Still this left his good right hind leg free, and it swung with a ferocity and rapidity that looked like he had a score of hoofs free instead of one. Indeed, his tawny length was darkened by an aureole of flying black hoofs hovering above him.

One stroke gave " 'Bars " joy—it caught Tex in the armpit and sent him sprawling, freeing the wicked old Roman-nosed head, and bringing new lust and hope of liberty into the blazing eyes.

But rise he could not, with three feet tightly bound, and soon Talbot lit on his neck and again got his muzzle upturned.

All the time Llano had been throwing half-hitches of his rope at the flying hoof.

Presently one of Llano's throws landed, and a moment later " 'Bars " lay helpless " hog-tied," his four feet securely lashed together.

Then the fastening the *jacemo* on his head was an easy task, so the vicious teeth were avoided.

Released, old " 'Bars " shook himself, glared resentfully at his enemies, and trotted back into the *remuda*.

Coiling his rope, Llano remarked:

" I shore neve' see that much pizon 'n' hell wropped up in airy hoss hide befo'. ' 'Bars ' snaps like a 'gaitor, springs like a ' painter,' 'n' strikes 'n' kicks laik his legs was driv' by a little ole steam injen insiden him. 'N' his eyes! Wal, damn his eyes! I'd druther look intu th' talkin' end o' a gun than t' have ole ' 'Bars ' draw his eyes on me when he hits

th' war path. Jest looks like he'd foller yu from Corpus t' Cheyenne t' git yu, 'thout sleepin' or grazin' on th' way, 'n' jest nachally eat yu up wheneve' he cotched yu. Damn his old gory eyes anyway! They shore do talk more war 'n' I kin use. Kid, yu is sutenly welcome t' that ole yaller hellion, 'n' if I was yu, I'd lope back t' Pawnee Butte, climb her 'n' sun dance thar fer a week tryin' t' fill my medicine bag wi' new tricks 'fore I tackled ' 'Bars ' agin—'n' then I'd jest jump off that east cliff ruther'n tackle him."

To give him time to cool off from the indignities put upon him, I waited a couple of days before venturing any new liberties with " Walkingbars." To the infinite surprise of the outfit, he proved still fairly amenable to kindness, and so he remained to the end of our association, bar an occasional exhibition of violence to leave it plain his comparative tractability was due to sufferance rather than to surrender.

A few days later, when we were approaching the Owl Creek Ranch and Con realised it was nearing his last chance to get even, he took a final fall out of me, and it was a good one.

One morning at breakfast he called across the camp fire:

" Kid, th' ole man told me he wanted a good fresh milk cow soon's I c'd git her t' him. We're a week late now gittin' back, 'n' I reckon he's pow'ful hot 'cause he haint got her befo'. Yestiddy I threw out intu th' cut a shore dandy, three quarter shorthorn, 'n' her calf—'ts jest about what N. R. wants. When yu saddle up I'll out th' pa'r out t' yu 'n' yu kin run 'em in t' th' home ranch—'ts only twenty mile, 'n' if yur right peart yu kin run 'em in thar agin noon, 'n' git back t' camp t'night—caint he, boys?" with a significant glance round the circle of punchers squatted at their breakfast.

I noted them look at each other in surprise, but for a long time none spoke. Presently, however, Llano blurted out:

" By ——, Con, I'll bet yu my outfit, gun, saddle 'n' tricks, agin yurn yu caint pick airy cow 'n' calf outen th' herd yu yu'sef, single-handed, kin keep bunched by ther lonesomes, outen th' thousands o' loose range cattle that make this plain look crowded as a bee tepee, an' keep anywhar near a course with 'em fer five miles. Cow'd be sure t' break intu some o' th' loose bunches or get on th' prod 'n' stan' yu off, o' th' calf 'll play out 'n' go into camp while his mammy runs yu foot races tryen' t' lose yu from th' calf. 'Sides they's no trail from heah t' Owl Creek Ranch. All yu c'd 'do 'd be t' pint th' kid th' general direction 'n' tell him t' chase his nose, 'n' what 'n hell's t' keep th' bead o' his tende'foot nose on old Owl Creek? He'd shore git lost so hard it'd keep all th' riders o' th' gineral South Platte round-up a circlin' a week t' git t' throw him intu th' bunch, 'n' by that time he'd be lean 'n' loony 's a sheep herder 'n' wild 's the old ' Black Stallion o' Chalk Bluffs.' "

Con scowled angrily at Llano and then said, with a poor attempt at an agreeable smile :

" Kid, that freckled short-horn that miscalls hisself from Llano 's a short sport 'n' a long shot from a real rawhide. He 'lows t' buffalo yu. They ain't airy shore 'nough rawhide in th' bunch as 'll say it *caint* be did, 'n' did easy," and he looked threateningly about the circle. " O' cou'se it'll keep yu humpin' yu'sef a few, but yu'll see th' end o' th' trail long 'fore night," and he must have added under his breath, *any trail but the one to Owl Creek.* " Llano, yu speckled ' doggie,' why d——n yur fool soul, ef we didn't have this bunch o' cows under herd I'd jest call yer hand 'n' set yu afoot, fer I'd gamble all I got I c'd take my top cuttin' hoss 'n' run airy cow 'n' calf in the bunch intu th' Owl Creek pens 'thout reinin' or quirtin.' "

This settled the question for me. I knew the job was

considered a deadly hard one by every man in camp, knew it by their very silence—proving it one of the few subjects too serious to talk and jest about—but jumped at it gladly as another opportunity in the struggle to lose my identity as a tenderfoot.

While I was saddling my toughest horse, outside of " Walkingbars," whom I did not dare trust on such a trip, Tex strolled over for a friendly word:

" Kid, Con's stacked yu up agin it good 'n' plenty this time. Th' range is black with L. F. 'n' N. D. cows every jump o' the way. Ef yu git t' pen that cow 'n' calf at Owl Creek it'll be one o' old Mahster's redheadedest miracles, 'side which a feller a walkin' on water or a climbin' outen th' belly o' a big fish 's easy 's takin' yu mo'nin' coffee. But yu *kin* make a hell o' a stagger at it 'n' do yur d——dest, 'n' yu might draw luck 'nough t' git thar; ef yu do, thar ain't airy puncher 'tween Goliad 'n' Greeley but 'd admire t' throw in wi' yu as a expert rawhide, 'n' t' pump lead at any critter that says yu ain't straight off th' haid wate's o' Bitter Creek.

" Th' main trick, Kid, 's t' keep her off th' prod 'n' sweet-tempered. Ef yu crowds her too hard 'n' gits her on th' fight, it's ' Katy bar th' door ' wi' yu, 'n' *adios* t' her 'n' her calf. Put in most o' yu time a shovin' th' loose range stock back away from yu, 'n' keep her a driftin' tow'rd Owl Creek so easy like she 'lows she's goin' 'cause she jest nachally has impo'tant bizness up thar she's bound t' 'tend t' he'se'f.

" Two miles up Willow 's th' uppe' pen, 'n' thar yu strikes off no'west. Our wagon sign comin' down 'll be all washed out by th' rains, but ef yu kin keep a no'west cou'se fo' fifteen miles yu'll hit th' west end o' th' Chalk Bluffs, wi' a lone butte a standin' out by hi'se'f, 'n' yu goes up ove' th' pass 'tween th' butte 'n' th' main bluffs, 'n' 't th' top o' th' pass yu kin see th' ranch three mile away.

" Ef yu gets to th' east o' no'th hit'll take yu intu deep bays o' th' bluffs whar th' country's all standin' on aidge 'n' 'll stand yu on yu' haid. Ef yu b'ars too far west hit'll be lay out unde' yu saddle blanket, fo' yu an' *keen sabe* case whar yu brings up. Hit's fo'ty mile no'th to th' U. P., same west to th' D. P., fifty south to th' Platte, same east t' Crow Creek, wi' only one othe' ranch in the squar', Brewster's, so yu ain't liable to be crowded none, 'cept to know straight up from sideways. Ef yu gits plumb lost, jest git down, onsaddle 'n' rest 'n' graze yu' hoss 'n' study hit ove' plenty. Then pick a cou'se somewhars—anywhars—fork yu' cayuse 'n' keep goin' plumb straight twell yu runs up agin somethin' 'sides jest room t' ride in or meets up wi' somebody that's at hisse'f 'n' kin git down, 'n' make a map in th' sand 'n' show yu whar yu're at."

And this was all Tex, or, indeed, anybody, could do for me.

I mounted and rode out to the herd already stringing out on the trail.

While Con was riding up the line searching for the cow and calf he had selected, Jack Talbot rode up and observed :

" Mistah Kid, I shore gits from unde' my hat to yu gall. Ole N. R. 'n' his'n could live on Owl milk twell th' hull d——n fambly hooted every blamed time they tried t' say somethin' 'fore I'd try t' run 'em a lone cow 'n' calf from Willow t' th' home ranch. Yu has my respec's fo' li'tin' in t' do hit; 'n' ef yu gits her thar, I'll make that d——d or'nery Con Humphreys kill the biggest maverick in the bunch 'n' write yu on th' inside o' hit's hide, wi' wagon dope fo' ink 'n' his pinted ole nose fo' a pen, a full diplomi for bein' th' ring-tailedst puncher 'tween th' Brazos 'n' Bow River, shore's my daddy's name's Talbot."

By the time Jack had finished his friendly remarks, Con

had found the cow, cut her from the herd, and yelled to me to come and take her, which I did. She was a half-bred Durham, with the breadth and depth of quarter of the better breed, but the long, sharp horns of her Spanish ancestry, wild, like the rest, as a deer, and was followed by a calf, two or three weeks old.

Keen to break back to the herd, she gave me a lively run to carry her past and beyond the point of the herd, but once ahead, I had comparatively easy going for two miles up Willow Valley, and two miles more out northwest from the upper pen, for the sun was scarcely a half-hour high, and the range cattle were still well out in the hills, feeding.

I crowded her little as possible, both to avoid getting her on the fight and to save the calf's strength, for once the calf played out or the mother got on the prod, driving must cease.

All about me lay the billowy plains, rising gently into tall, rounded yellow ridges, one like another as two peas, and then sinking into valleys, rising and sinking, ever rising and sinking. Indeed, the landscape, look where one would, was devoid of helpful landmark of any description save the dark blue line, nearly a hundred miles west of me, that marked the great wall of the Rockies, with Pike's Peak its farthest visible buttress to the south, breaking down to more modest height north of Gray's Peak, and stretching away into the north till lost entirely to view behind distant swells of the plains.

And even the Rockies helped me none in keeping my course, for north of Gray's Peak the visible reach of the range was, at my distance, without distinguishing uplift to help me steer by.

About four miles out from camp and two north of the upper Willow corrals, my real troubles began, and they were real enough. The plains were alive, swarming everywhere with cattle, grazing singly and in groups, and the cow, which I was

not long in dubbing " Con's Revenge," broke at top speed in any and all directions that ranged widest from our proper route. She would dash off at top speed, a pace the calf could not follow and that quickly distanced it, and it took near the best gait of my horse to head and turn her back, often to find the calf clumsily galloping toward another (by this time) nearer bunch. Then the two had to be thrown together and turned away from the group the calf was nearing.

By the time we were out about eight miles, as near as I could judge, from the pen, " Con's Revenge," had gotten tired down till her breaks were at a trot instead of a gallop, my horse was showing some distress, and " Mrs. Revenge " made two breaks to charge and chase me when I sought to turn her back.

So, seeing there was nothing for it but patience and time, I swept out in a wide circle ahead, yelling and shooting, and scattering the range stock to right and left, and then wheeled back—only to see " Mrs. Revenge " trotting away towards Willow fast as the calf could follow, requiring another half-mile dash to overtake and turn her !

And this wearing, heart-breaking work continued for hours, with occasional brief dismounts, to loosen my saddle, and cool and rest my horse when range cattle were at a safe distance, usually after one of my short runs to scatter them.

I had hoped to sight the point of Chalk Bluffs before noon, but the day dragged on into mid-afternoon with naught but the swells and dips of the plains, and the distant blue line of the Rockies in sight.

The keeping a course had been made all the more difficult by my constant dashes to right and left, stampeding away the range cattle, and by this time I hadn't the ghost of an idea of my real position, except that I felt sure I must have passed the bluff point too far south to see it. All certain was that I

still had my charges safely in hand, now so leg-weary they were glad to rest when I had to leave them to clear the way, the cow so ill-tempered she often charged or stood and threatened me for five or ten minutes, eyes blazing, horns tossing.

With night approaching, a storm coming rapidly down on me from the north-east, and my horse close to "dead on his legs," I decided to take a chance on my judgment, and swung my course, as well as I could, to the east of north.

And lucky I was to make the shift, for in half an hour a great butte rose out of the plains a trifle to the right of my course. It did not look like the point of Chalk Bluffs to me, but it was something to cling to and I made for it.

An hour later, in the very nick of time before a heavy plunging rain came down and shut out any distant view, off in the north, to the left of the butte, I saw a big ranch and corrals which must be N. R.'s. In the storm cow and calf became utterly unmanageable, and two miles south of the ranch I left them and rode in, to make sure of cover before I lost my direction in the storm.

As I neared the ranch the downpour ceased, and the sun came out, showing me good old N. R. himself, comfortably settled in an easy chair on the porch.

"Well, kid, where's the round-up?" was his greeting.

"Camped to-night at the Upper Willow pen," I replied.

"Well, what are you doing away from it? Come a little too tough and turned in your string of horses and quit?" he asked.

"No; Con started me at sun-up this morning to drive you in a milk cow and calf," I answered.

"Started you alone to drive a wild cow and calf twenty miles through range cattle? The h—— he did! Wonder if he was mad or crazy. Well, where is she, anyhow?" he snapped.

"Two miles south of the ranch I left her in the storm and came in," I said.

"Oh, you did! Well, your orders were to bring her *here*, were they not?"

"Yes."

"Well, I guess you better get her."

"Give me a fresh horse and I will—mine's dead on its legs."

"Should think he'd be dead all over; you can rope any you like out of the pen."

A few minutes later I loped away south on a fresh mount, had the luck to find my charges, somewhat cooled off by the storm and rested, and drifting them on slowly and gently, succeeded in safely penning them just at sunset; they were so worn and tired they marched up to and through the corral gate like a bunch of wild horses after a "nine-day walk-down."

As I was unsaddling, N. R. strolled up and observed:

"Kid, you've sure won puncher spurs to-day."

And that night I dined luxuriously at the big ranch house table.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE TENDERFOOT'S FIRST HERD

THE first herd I bought and decorated with the Three Crow brand, with a "crop" of the right and "under half crop" of the left as an earmark, brought me so many anxieties that matured into full-grown troubles and so many troubles that developed anxieties that I am not likely ever to forget it.

And yet the herd was not a big one; in fact, it was so

small and punchers' wages were so high for an outfit going north into the Indian country that I cut expenses by dispensing with the hiring of a foreman and undertaking to run the outfit myself.

For an outfit of thoroughbred Texas brush-splitters a tenderfoot owner was bad enough, always the object of ill-concealed distrust and contempt, and only endurable so long as the pay was sure and mounts plenty and sound, while a tenderfoot foreman was nothing short of a downright humiliation, his simplest orders a personal affront hard for these sturdy, masterful experts at their hazardous calling to keep from resenting.

Indeed, even old political lines were a fruitful source of dislike and ill-will for the tenderfoot—who was nearly always a Northerner, while all the best punchers were Texas, the elders themselves ex-Confederate soldiers, the younger sons of Wearers of the Gray, men in whose honest partisan hearts still glowed bright the embers of the flame of Civil War that a decade before had swept their well-beloved South and left it prostrate.

It was, therefore, little to be wondered at that " a blue-bellied Yankee kid " had little of their liking for his personality and less of their respect for what he knew.

In fact, I doubt if I ever should have succeeded in persuading an outfit of real rawhides to ride out under my leadership but for dear old Tex, who had quit the N. D. outfit to follow me.

Tex put the situation and the temper of the men better than I have when he said :

" Ol' Man "—though only twenty, I became ' th' ol' man ' as soon as I started in to hire an outfit—" yu see it's thisaway. Cow punchin' 's a pr'fession no feller ever'll live long enough t' git t' know th' hull way from hoofs t' horns.

"Th' oldest rawhide livin', one that rid a runnin' iron fo' a hobby-hoss, wi' a rawhide hobble fo' a bridle, 'fore he was big enough t' fork a pony, 'n' was bornded wi' cow sense from his daddy, 'n' was throwin' strings at th' cat 'fore he could swing a rope, has t' cash in his last stack o' breath, 'n' turn into buzzard feed 'thout learnin' all th' meanness plannin' below th' horn wrinkles 'v a moss-back.

"As fo' cayuses, t' say nothin' o' spoiled outlaws, thar ain't airy buster from th' Brazos kin tell what new bunch o' hell *they*'re goin' t' hand him, o' whether she's comin' from th' front o' th' stern end.

"'N' when yu gits t' handlin' 'v 'em in big bunches, cows o' cayuses, ol' Mahste' hisse'f even caint *sorta* reckon what they'll up 'n' do.

"So you see, Ol' Man, it's jest nachally mos' pow'ful hard fo' a bunch o' long-horn rawhides like we-all t' git t' see how 'n hell a short-horn, stall-fed Yankee like yu-all, that don't know *mesquite* from *zacaton* o' sweetbreads from kidney fat, 's a goin' t' git t' handle a cow outfit anywheres, 'specially up in th' Injun country—'n' them red jaspers 's a harder bunch t' git t' *sabe* than cows o' cayuses!

"'Pears t' we-all like it'll be nigh hell fo' yu-all 'n' *plumb* hell for we-all—yu-all a strainin' o' yu intellec' tryin' t' give orders 'bout work you don't *sabe*, 'n' we-all a *bustin'* o' ourn tryin' t' *sabe* what yu'all's tryin' t' git out o' yu haid!

"But she's a go, all th' same! I got a bunch o' ivory-handled red-sashers as 'll shore start out—'n' 'll stay ef they kin git t' stand her.

"How 'd I git 'em? Why, jest tellin' 'v 'em what yu done wi' that old hellion o' a outlaw, 'Walkingbars,' 't nobody else could handle 'thout nigh killin' him, 'n' how yu, single-handed, driv' th' lone cow 'n' calf twenty mile through th' heart o' th' Iliff range t' Owl Creek.

" When I got done, th' boys they 'llowed yu was packin' a pow'ful heavy jag o' gall o' luck, o' Injun medicine, they couldn't make out which, 'n' they jest nachally figured 't either one might do, 'n' 't they'd take a chanct that she'd hold out 'n' stay wi' yu. That feller Cress he'ped by him sayin' yu shore must have some hoss sense 'n' a *leetle* smatterin' o' cow sense.

" So, Ol' Man, she's a go ! "

And Tex drew a deep breath and leaned heavily upon the polished walnut of George Masten's bar, weak, limp, exhausted from the sudden loss, in a few minutes, of more language than he usually gave up in a month.

The getting of my money's worth in the purchase of a herd was a most difficult task.

Of relative values of cattle and horses I knew literally nothing, and prices varied with the breed, quality, age and condition ; the cheapest, the gaunt, leggy, wild long-horn stock of straight Spanish breed come out of the chapparal along the lower reaches of the Rio Grande ; the dearest, the thick-loined, deep-quartered, dark red half-breed short-horn Oregonians, descended from some of the best Missouri and Illinois strains, trailed by emigrants across the plains in the early '50's. Between these two extremes were two intermediate grades, the Middle Texans and Utahs.

Of course in each grade there was wide difference in quality and therefore in values.

Then, to make the tenderfoot buyer's task almost hopeless, a separate price was set on cows and calves, in one class, and on yearlings, two, three, and four-year-olds, in four distinct classes ; and classification by age had to be made on the open plains, while the cattle were run in a narrow and steady stream between the mounted buyer and seller.

While really the only practicable method of classification,

it plainly gave the canny, hawk-eyed old-time trail drivers a terrible advantage over the tenderfoot they never neglected—a chance to class many a big calf as a yearling, long yearlings as two-year-old, etc., and thus to heavily mark up the average *per capita* price of the herd.

And not always content even with this advantage, there was one notorious bit of mixed humour and thrift, where 1,200 cattle were converted into 2,400, in making the running tally or count, by selecting an isolated hill as the place of their delivery to their monocled, crop-carrying, straight-spurred British buyer, and the simple expedient of running the tallied cattle *round* the hill for recount until their actual number was doubled! Thus were staid English sovereigns captured and converted into laughter-screaming American eagles!

But this was an exception proving the rule.

For years cattle were dealt in by thousands, running high in six figures in value, on contracts (for two or three months future delivery) which often remained mere verbal agreements, or at best were represented by a few lines rudely pencilled on the back of a tomato can label!

No matter how largely the market prices in the interval might vary against either buyer or seller, I never heard of the case of a man getting the worst of such a trade undertaking to repudiate his agreement—some from motives of inherent honesty, some from an inside hunch that any attempt at repudiation would promptly result in the distribution through his system of more lead than he could comfortably carry.

In those days cowmen's differences never got into the civil courts and very seldom into the criminal—never, in fact, except where the party in chief interest ran out of ·45 cartridges or into a prairie dog hole.

Squabble how they might over classification, cowmen always delivered and received as agreed.

The pitfalls of classification I promptly side-stepped, by deciding to buy a straight bunch of cows and calves.

The mystery of relative values I had to find the key for, and old newspaper instinct promptly suggested—*pick the biggest winner and study him at his work.*

At that time Alex Swan was the largest buyer of trail cattle and the most experienced and successful cowman in Wyoming, so generally conceded.

Thus it happened that, for a month, everywhere that Alex went the tenderfoot went too. Every herd Swan examined, I was seldom out of earshot—and usually contrived to learn the prices he bid, whether they were accepted or rejected.

Finally a day came when he refused a bunch about my size (716 cows, each with a calf by its side) on a difference of a dollar a head with the seller, and when he was gone, after much palaver and the inevitable cow-trade accompaniment of stick whittling, I got the seller to split the dollar and bought the bunch.

The herd bought was delivered to me at the home ranch of the seller (who had himself driven them from Utah), near the summit of one of the lowest passes in the Rockies. Delivery was not finished till so late in the afternoon we were able to drive no more than a scant four miles from the seller's ranch, and compelled to camp in the heart of his range.

And since he had that same day turned loose on his ranch 2,000 head bearing the same brand as my purchase, the last possible care was necessary against straying or a stampede. Any there so lost it would be extremely difficult, and perhaps even impossible, to recover, for the seller was reputed an adept at making the best of a profitable opportunity.

Camp was made beside a spring at the edge of a fairly level grassy glade two or three hundred yards wide. To the west of the glade lay a mile of tangled dead fall and thick strewn

boulders, breaking sharply down at its western edge, in an almost precipitous descent of two or three hundred feet, to a small tributary of the Laramie River. It was as rough a bit of country as even the combined effect of a glacier, fire and wind could possibly produce, almost utterly impassable to a horseman in daylight.

As Cress put it while we were eating supper:

"I shore don't like th' look o' that old *lobo* that tallied t' us, 'n' I likes his motions less than his looks. With his p'inted ole nose 'n' yaller eyes, he favours a wolf more'n any human I ever threw an eye on, 'n' his turnin' a big bunch o' his drive loose on th' range in th' same road-brand you done bot under, looks like he was figurin' on our makin' a big loosin' 'fore we kin get out o' his range or git t' know any 'v 'em well 'nough t' tell 'em by th' flesh marks 'n' make a *re*claim Reckon we-all better make her a double-guard after th' first relief—for any hell he tries to kick up in the way o' a loose blanket or chap-shakin' stampede 'll come along o' midnight.

"If they jumps west into that snarl o' wind-falled dead timber 'n' rocks, I allows no hoss ever foaled is liable to live thro' it long 'nough t' git t' head 'n' turn 'em. 'N' if ever they reaches th' aidge o' that thar cañon, yu're set back, Ol' Man, 'n' that ole *lobo's* set up by every one goin' over, a makin' ole *lobo* so pleased with hisse'f he's liable t' tickle plumb t' death if we-all don't empty a few loads o' lead into his carcass t' *di*vert him. It's shore head 'em quick, Ol' Man, if they jumps. 'N' we kin thank ole Mahster they're cows, 'stead o' steers!"

Of course the chance that a herd of cows and calves, thoroughly trail broke and well-grazed and watered, would stampede of a fair night was scarcely one in a thousand; but if, from any circumstance, they should jump their bed ground, Cress put the certainty of heavy losses none too strongly.

So I decided to take the first relief myself, giving Cress, as mover of the motion, the honour of sitting his horse all night with me, with the understanding that at 10.30 p.m. Tex should join us with the balance of the outfit, every man on his best horse. Surely the eight of us could hold them, come what might.

My mount was a great, powerful fifteen and three-quarter hand stocking-legged sorrel, far better than a half-breed. I had bought him of Arthur Coffee, who had brought him through from Texas that spring with a drive of 500 unbroke mustangs " for stampede insurance," as Coffee put it.

" And if there's anything on these plains he can't outrun, short of somebody's thoroughbred, I'll give you back your $150 ; our *remouda* stampeded eight times without the loss of a single horse, and it was ' Stocking ' turned them every time," Coffee added.

" Stocking " was that rare equine combination of steel spring muscles and fierce spirit that leaves the best horseman in doubt how long he may remain his master ; a horse that, shirking nothing, grandly charges everything you put him at —and takes it or dies—a horse out of a million to have between your knees in any great emergency.

And that night " Stocking " proved himself far and away the cheapest " insurance " I ever bought, for he certainly saved me the better part of $20,000 !

It was a perfect night in late September, without moon, but cloudless, the stars glittering like pale rubies in their azure setting, dark, of course, and yet far short of the brooding black of an Eastern night, the last night to look for a stampede unless from wilful mischief or from whatever of the supernatural agencies sometimes in an instant turn a sleeping herd into a running, raging animal torrent nigh impossible to stem.

Round and round we rode, Cress and I, jingling our spurs and humming snatches of song to avoid startling our charges by sudden silent appearance out of the darkness.

There they lay, bedded down in a circle, quiet and peaceful as pigs in a pen, a chorus of cud-chewing rising from the wakeful, and of contented deep bass sighs of surfeit from the sleepers.

It was too early in the night for any straying from within the herd, so we could give most of our attention to any trouble approaching from without.

But no trouble came, nothing happened—until nearly ten o'clock.

At the moment, I was riding on the far eastern edge of the circle.

Suddenly, with no hint of alarm or untoward incident, up rose the herd as one and off the bed ground they poured in mad gallop, by every ill fatality due west!

Caught unexpected just on the edge of the surging bovine torrent, Cress and his horse (I later learned) were struck and knocked prostrate, luckily to one side of its path, the horse so badly injured he was of little further use on the run.

Instantly they jumped I loosened rein and gave "Stocking" spur and quirt at every bound, racing for the lead.

In a moment, it seemed, we were out of the glade and into the dead fall.

Just as I entered the timber I heard two shots behind and to the left of me.

Beside me roared the maddened herd, in dense mass.

Above the thunder of their hoofs and the clashing of their horns rose the crash of rending timber, through which they drove like a heavily loaded train through empty box cars.

They appeared irresistible. As well try to check Niagara or stay a flooding tide!

And on we went, " Stocking " and I gaining on them at every jump.

Brave old " Stocking " seemed to have the eyes of a cat and the leaping muscles of a black-tailed buck.

Smashing through tangles of dead limbs, bounding over great gray trunks, leaping boulders, dodging the impossible jumps in mighty swerves that taxed my strength to keep my seat, " Stocking " raced successfully in the dark across the worst piece of country I believe it was ever given a horse to survive, and carried me to the front of the leaders, in the first half mile !

It was splendid, epic, as proud a moment as equine history affords.

And no spur or quirt blow touched him after we reached the timber—I was too busy struggling to keep my seat !

On a less heroic horse than " Stocking " I dare say I should have funked running squarely in the lead of the bloody, heaving, hideous mass hard upon our heels, for there to fall meant instant mangling—death.

But with his straining muscles superbly answering every call, his great barrel pulsing evenly between my thighs, without throb or catch of distress, somehow his mighty strength of will and thews got into mine, and lead them all we did, I yelling and shooting into the leaders fast as I could empty and reload my gun.

Presently, with now and then a leader falling to my shots, the herd swerved a trifle north.

A moment later my men from camp began arriving one by one, adding their yells and shots and thrashing slickers to mine.

Five minutes later the stampede was broken and the herd " milling " furiously, running round and round in a compact, solid mass.

Fifteen minutes later we had the mill broken, and were quietly moving the herd back to the bed ground.

When morning came we found twenty-six dead in the timber, of trampling or shots, while many were dehorned or otherwise cut and mutilated.

The actual cause of the stampede we never knew, but we had something more tangible than suspicions.

And it was good old faithful Tex who gave them point.

" When yu-all 'n' Cress takes first relief," he said, " I slips out 'round th' herd 'n' stays coyotin' 'round back 'n' forth 'tween th' herd 'n' ole *lobo's* camp. Never seed nothin' till th' herd jumped, 'n' then here come a feller quirtin' 'n' spurrin' south I knowed couldn't be yu-all, 'n' so I lends him two loads out o' my gun 'fore he gits losed in th' dark. This mornin' I circles for his trail 'n' got it—'n' also a spur, shot loose at th' concho, 'n' besides th' juicy joy o' seein' right smart o' blood along his tracks. If we only had these yere cows branded, I'd be in favour o' turnin' all other holts loose 'till we-all'd shot the lights outen everything that wears a gun on this d——d thievin' ranch."

The tenderfoot was getting on, but Tex's suggestion was so far a hotter pace than even " Stocking's," that the culprits were left with the will for the deed.

While the plan was later changed, it was then my intention ultimately to drive north-west into the Fort Casper country in search of a range for the herd. The outpost of range settlement in that direction at the time was the Loomis Ranch, at the west end of the Laramie Cañon and forty miles north of the U. P., then abandoned on account of Sioux horse-stealing raids that spring.

However, hearing it had large corrals in good condition, thither we drove, only to find the chutes of the corrals in such bad condition they could not be used. This compelled us

to rope and throw each cow and calf singly, one rider roping the head, another rider the heels, a third man " tailing down," and a fourth applying the branding-iron.

It was hard, wearing work, so hard on the horses that by the time the last cow was branded no horses remained with the strength or soundness of back to justify their use in calf branding.

Grazed slowly through over the Bitter Creek trail, the calves were almost as heavy and strong as Texas yearlings, so heavy that the roping and throwing them afoot exhausted and irritated the men till they became nearly unmanageable.

The second evening of this work I overheard Mack Lambert holding forth to his bed-mate :

" What 'n hell 'd we-all want t' hire out for t' a fool tenderfoot kid that caint tell a yearling from a coyote a couple o' hundred yards off ? Fine bunch o' dilberries, we-uns, a lettin' him fetch us out 'n' set us afoot th' first ten days ! I'd druther go down into th' settlements 'n' hire out t' some ole long-whiskered granger t' shovel hay 'n' dig post holes than be made t' work cows afoot like a locoed sheep-herder. It's me for a jump, *pronto* ! "

Indeed, it was plain this sentiment pervaded the entire outfit, bar Tex and Cress, who worked faithfully wherever I put them.

The next day the general irritation bred a crisis.

Tired and slack in his work, Mack several times allowed calves such free run on his rope that they smashed into Howe, who was " tailing down " for another roper.

Twice I had warned him to be more careful—the only result a surly " *bueno.*"

Presently another of Mack's calves crashed into Howe, its sharp hoof badly tearing his hand. Instantly he sprang to his feet, seized a branding-iron and felled Mack, luckily with

no more than a glancing blow, and jumped on and began beating him.

Too short-handed to have a man disabled, I grabbed the men and pulled them apart and ordered them back to the work, and they sullenly complied.

For perhaps fifteen minutes there was peace in the pen, and then suddenly Cress ran up and told me Mack was coming from the wagon with my rifle—must have slipped out of the pen unobserved to arm himself, as he, with several others, had left their belts at the wagon.

Plainly a kill-up would be more disastrous to work than a beat-up, and must be stopped.

As I jumped over the corral fence my pistol scabbard slipped squarely in front of me—fortunately.

Mack was rapidly approaching me.

Just as I hit the ground, I saw him throw a cartridge into the great ·45–120 Sharps, and cock it.

We met.

" What are you doing with that gun, Mack ? " I asked.

" Goin' t' kill Howe, by ——," he growled.

" Drop her instantly, Mack, and hop into that pen and go on roping," I bluffed.

" See yer hull tenderfoot layout in hell first—it's Howe fer th' buzzards ! "

" Drop her ! " I repeated.

" By ——, I'll beef yu, ef yu'r bound t' have it, 'n' *then* git Howe ! " and instantly he covered me with the full-cocked rifle, its great muzzle within two feet of my face, his snaky, wicked right eye gleaming maliciously at me over the gun sights.

And right there somebody about my size wished " the party was to hell and he was to home," and wondered why a threatening gun muzzle had been described as looking no larger than

a hogshead when this one was undoubtedly wide as the yawning future.

But badly scared as I was, I realised it meant death to lose that glittering eye for an instant, and contrived to hold it, I'm sure I don't know how.

And so we stood, both motionless, I verily believe two minutes, long enough anyway for me to recover wits and tongue, and I know that *must* have taken time.

There was nothing for it but a cold blazer, so I remarked, with a struggle for a grin that made the muscles of my face ache :

" Well, Mack, you *are* a four-flusher ! Don't dare turn her loose, do you ? Know if you did Tex and Cress would have your hide hung to dry before sundonw ! Why, there they go for the wagon now ! "

And before Mack could recover from his impulsive half-turn—to find that none but our two selves were outside the pen—my pistol was out of the scabbard and inserted sufficiently within his ear to convince him he had no further use for a rifle.

A hint to Mack that if he made any more gun plays or so much as batted an eye, I would help Howe rope and drag him, turned a kicker into a fairly good worker, and at the same time materially helped the general discipline of the outfit for a day or two.

CHAPTER FIVE

A COWBOY MUTINY

My trouble with my first bunch of cow punchers did not end with the termination of Mack Lambert's war play. With horses worn out and the men forced to work afoot in the

Loomis's corrals, the task of branding seven hundred three-fourths-grown Oregon calves, heavy as Texas yearlings, was hard on the strength and trying on the temper of master and men.

Moreover, as the men had predicted to Tex, and he had plainly put it to me before we left Cheyenne, I knew that I was making none too brilliant a success of my undertaking to act as my own foreman. Ignorance inspired many an ill-considered order that neither shortened nor lightened the work.

Presently the storm broke. One morning, as if by concerted agreement, all the men but Cress and Tex began disregarding my orders, openly jeered at them, idled through the day's work as they pleased, and freely cursed their stupidity for hiring out to a "blue-bellied Yankee kid tenderfoot," and two showed a sullen ugliness that threatened personal abuse or attack.

I was at my wits' end—desperate. I must be master of my outfit or quit the country, that was certain. Of course I might hire a foreman, but I felt I could not afford it—and besides could not get my own consent to abandon the task I had undertaken.

Moreover, I realised that unless I quickly re-established my authority, I should soon lose the fidelity of even Cress and Tex.

Only one sure way out of the dilemma appeared—to discharge the six kickers, fire them in the way punchers dread most and never accept without a gun play, except from a boss against whom they dare show no resentment, viz.: "to set them afoot to walk and pack their blankets to town."

With Lookout the nearest railway station and the walking none too good over the forty intervening miles of thick sage brush, the chances were about six to one that my career

would end right there in an unmarked grave, with only the whistle of the winds through the sage and a coyote chorus for a requiem.

But the chance had to be taken; there was nothing else for it. So that evening, during the first night guard, I made an opportunity to talk to Cress and Tex and learn if, as I believed, I could rely on their support.

Briefly I stated that I proposed to set the six afoot the next morning, and, if I succeeded in getting away with the play, to myself drive our four-mule team to Lookout and bring out a new outfit of men and fresh supplies from Laramie City, provided the two of them would do their best to hold the herd during the three days of my absence: "Stay with them, if you can, and if you lose them all you'll hear no kick from me," I finished.

Of aid in dealing with the insubordinates I asked none: that was my row, not theirs, and besides the task I set them was about enough, for it meant at least three days practically without sleep or rest.

Tex gripped my bridle arm with his great hairy hand and softly queried:

"Ol' Man, does yu *shorely* mean it? Thar's two in that bunch kin draw 'n' kill yu 'fore yu could get y'ur gun out."

"Certainly, Tex, I mean it," I answered. "I've just got it to do, must take the chance. Maybe they won't call the play; if they call, I'll have to do my best, that's all—and if they get me just write a line to —— —— —— at —— ——, and say what happened."

Both sat silent in their saddles so long I began to fear they were hesitating, but the moment Tex spoke I knew it was sheer astonishment that had chained their tongues.

With a grim smile, the loudest expression of pleasure or merriment Tex ever indulged in, he said to Cress:

"Now, Sam, ain't yu *d——n* glad yu come? Didn't I tell yu that ef our Ol' Man wa'n't nothin' but a little ol' tende'foot kid, he'd make a sooner, *poco tiempo?* 'Pears like he's comin' some a'ready, 'n' I allows all hell ain't a goin' t' stop yu 'n' me a stayin' with him t' th' last jump o' airy trail he reckons he wants t' foller!"

And then to me:

"Ol' Man, 'pears t' me like thar must be a Bitter Creek back whar yu come from, 'n' that yu must a been foaled up nigh th' headwaters. Why, yu d——n little ol' wolf, yu jest howl all yu want tu; 'n' ef that bunch gits t' junin' 'round when yu jumps 'em, 'n' yu caint eat 'em up fast 'nough by y'ur lonesome, Cress 'n' me'll jest nachally lite in 'n' he'p yu chew up th' hull passle.

"Stay with th' herd? Will we? Bet y'ur *alce* we'll stay with her, 'n' not lose yu airy a cow or calf, 'n' what's more, we'll stay wi' yu 'n' y'urn anywhar till hell's froze intu a skatin' pond.*

"Yu shore got a pow'rful variegated lot o' fool idees in that thar little nut o' y'urn 'bout runnin' a cow outfit, 'n' ef thar's airy show to git started at th' wrong end o' a job, it's been yu fer a loose tail-holt every time. But with this bunch o' hosstile sports y'ur shore makin' no mistake in th' game y'ur puttin' up, 'n' Cress 'n' me sits in 'n' draws cards cheerful, don't we, Cress?"

"We draws 'n' plays th' hand plumb t' th' finish, Ol' Man," answered Sam. "Keep y'ur eye screwed tight on airy feller y'ur talkin' t' p'rticular, 'n' be sure we'll 'tend t' all th' pressin'est wants o' his side partners. Lite into y'ur blankets 'n' pound y'ur ear a plenty 'n' don't worry none, for hits 'dobe dollars t' *tlacos* we'll either stampoodle that bunch 'thout throwin' lead or else git t' dance on their graves."

* Tex stayed with me five years; Cress, fourteen years.—THE AUTHOR.

"Good, boys," I responded; "I knew I could bank on you, and I'm not likely to forget what you've said and are ready to do. I'll call the game right after breakfast."

And then I rode into camp, staked my horse and rolled up in my blankets as advised. But it was little indeed I slept until near morning, for the task ahead of me was one the oldest and toughest trail boss could not contemplate with any large measure of enthusiasm.

The six men I had to deal with already held my authority in contempt and were ugly and resentful. Each was doubly armed, with Winchester and six-shooter. Four were reckless enough to throw lead if they felt they ought to, and two were mean enough, I well knew, to welcome the chance, both with notches on their guns unfairly won by "getting the drop." Thus it seemed certain that when they were forced to confront the insult and hardship of being "set afoot to pack their blankets to town," a bad mix-up was inevitable.

We breakfasted, as usual, shortly after dawn, before good sun-up, squatted closely about the camp-fire, for already at that altitude ice formed every night along the margin of the Laramie. It was a silent, surly group, with none of the usual jest and badinage over "hen-skin blankets" and "fat huldys" a cold morning usually inspired.

Thus coffee, beans and beef were soon chambered, cigarettes rolled and lit, and the outfit rose.

Mack Lambert was the first to step to his saddle and pick up his rope to catch his morning mount.

"Drop that rope, you ——!" I called.

"What in hell ——"

"Drop it and cut the back talk! It means that your rope don't go on any more Three Crow horses, and that you and the five other kickers have your time, quit camp

in ten minutes and hit the trail for the railroad, packing your blankets, and that any man of you that don't feel like he'd enjoy the promenade can go into action right now!"

As I spoke I had been advancing on Mack until, finished, we stood close face to face.

At first his expression was one of blank astonishment, and then, as he came to realise that he, a full-pledged puncher from the Brazos, and his five saddle mates, none of whom probably had walked as much as five miles straight away in five years, were about to suffer the indignity of being set afoot forty miles from the railway, the lips tightened and eyes glowered murderous hate.

"You! You, bald-faced tenderfoot! Fire us t' hoof it t' town! It's a dog trot for hell for you, 'n' you starts right now!"

And at the word his hand flashed back to his pistol, but, before his fingers could have tightened on the butt, I landed a violent kick fair on the flat of Mack's shin bone, that doubled him up, howling with the pain, and gave me a chance to snatch his pistol from its scabbard and give him a tap on the jaw with it that put him temporarily out of pain.

Then out came my own gun, and with the pair in my hands I whirled on the bunch, wondering how it came they had left me still alive, and expecting the next instant to be my last.

But there was nothing doing! All necessary was already done—most efficiently—by dear old Tex.

And I had been so much preoccupied that I had not even noted the crash of his blow that put an end to the one other attempt to turn our little drama into a tragedy.

While I was occupied with Mack, Clark, the other "bad man" of the lot, stood ten steps on my left and a little behind me.

At the instant Mack started to draw, Clark had jerked his gun, but before it was fairly free of the scabbard, Tex had hit him a terrible smash with his pistol, breaking his nose, laying him out stiff, and quickly swelling both eyes until they were in poor shape for accurate snap-shooting.

And then I found that, all the time, quiet, easy-going Sam Cress had been sitting comfortably on the ground, with his back against a wagon wheel, the left knee drawn up for a convenient elbow rest, and his Winchester in his hands, ready to pot any that needed it!

Just as I turned from Mack, Sam remarked:

"Fellers, th' kid's dealin' th' only game thar's any show t' sit in 'round here; I'm in th' 'lookout' chair, 'n' Tex is keeping cases. Ef she looks good t' yu, we'll be glad t' go yu a whirl. What say?"

But there was no "say." The two toughest were down, unconscious, the rest cowed; and a half hour later the six insubordinates sullenly but quietly marched off south through the sage brush.

It was mid-forenoon of the fourth day before I got back from Laramie City with a new outfit of men. Tex and Sam were drawn and heavy-eyed from their long vigil, but not a hoof was missing from the 1,506 left in their custody! It was a remarkable feat for two men, and one that would have been impossible except with a well-broke trail herd ranging on generous feed in a country entirely free of other cattle.

Branding soon finished and a few spare days allowed for resting the horses, a fortnight later we swung the herd north up Duck Creek Valley to the head of "Collin's Cut Off," the shortest route through the main range from Fort Laramie to Medicine Bow, a mere pack trail of old fur-trading days, that neither before or since, to the best of my belief, ever had a herd taken through it, following a gorge so narrow, heavily

timbered, and at times so precipitous as to be almost impassable to anything but a Rocky Mountain goat.

But time was pressing. Snow was already due, snow that would seal all the passes and leave us to winter on the bleak Laramie Plains. So into it we plunged, and at last, after many mishaps and no inconsiderable loss, out of it we came—drifted down the Sabille to the Laramie, and then across to the Platte, which we crossed in a heavy snow-storm the very last day before ice formed so heavily in the river that later crossing became impossible.

With the snow come, we had to winter where we were.

A sheltered nook on Cottonwood Creek, twelve miles west of Fort Laramie, I chose for our winter camp, and tight, warm diggings were soon finished; literally "diggings," for the house was a hole eighteen feet square dug in the side of the bank, set round with cottonwood poles, standing on end close together, the crevices chinked with mud, and roofed with like poles covered with grass and earth, a rude stone fireplace and chimney at the back.

The one extravagance about the house was the door. Lacking lumber, the door remained for some time an unsolved problem—until one day my top cutting horse fell under Cress and broke a leg, leaving no alternative but to shoot him.

And then a sound economic thought occurred to the resourceful Sam—he skinned the top cutter, stretched the green hide cleverly on a pole frame, hung the frame on rawhide hinges, and lo! we had a door—loose, to be sure, of latch and wide of crevice, but still a door, a seventy-five dollar door on a ten dollar house!

The outfit comfortably settled, Cress and I mounted and rode away south for Cheyenne, he for a visit to his Texas home and friends, I for a short business trip to New York.

Reaching Cheyenne early in the forenoon of the third day

from the ranch, we were not in town an hour before Cress came to me with the cheerful news that Mack Lambert was in town drunk, had heard of my arrival, and was hunting me with a gun, swearing to kill me on sight.

Mack sober I had learned not to fear, except from ambush. Mack drunk, however, was certain to be a deadly, dangerous proposition; and thus it happened that I can now recall that particular forenoon as rather the most uncertain and uncomfortable I ever experienced.

I had many errands I could not neglect that took me all about the town, and it was just good luck and nothing else that we did not meet. And when at 1.30 p.m. I rolled out of the station bound eastward, comfortably settled on Pullman plush, and felt new miles rapidly stacking up between Mack and myself, I, for a time, settled down to serious study whether the game was worth the candle, and, after mature reflection, decided it was.

A month later, mid-December, found me back in Wyoming, jogging alone northward on the Laramie road.

Late the second afternoon out from Cheyenne, between Chugwater and Eagle's Nest, ahead of me I saw a heavily laden ranch supply wagon, its four yoke of work cattle struggling painfully through the deep sand, in frequent sudden lurching spurts caused by the wicked lash of their needlessly cruel driver, who trudged afoot alongside the nigh wheeler.

And as I approached the team, whom should I recognise in the bull whacker but Mack Lambert—evidently stranded for a saddle-seat by too late a spree in town and forced to take orders as a bull whacker, a situation sure to have him in willing temper for any war play that offered!

Dodge I should have been glad to, but I did not dare dodge; felt I could not afford it. Here I had all the advantage of a

complete surprise; any day later the chance of a surprise might be his.

After his war talk in Cheyenne I should have been perfectly justified in shooting him down without warning—and from the viewpoint of my own future peace of mind it was a great temptation. He or his kind would do no less; why not I?

But that was a trifle too large an order in cow range ethics, and so I smothered the thought and decided to tackle him.

We were alone; no one in sight ahead or behind.

The groans of overloaded axles and the shrill creak of straining yoke-bows covered all sounds of my own approach through the heavy sand of the road until I was opposite the hind wheels of his wagon. Then, as I saw him note a strange sound and begin to turn, I spurred forward, and in a bound of my horse was immediately upon him and drew rein.

For a few seconds we glared at each other. Then he growled:

"Well, by ——, it's you, is it?"

"Yes, Mack, it's just me," I replied. "And I've something to say to you. I've heard that a month ago you were hunting me in Cheyenne, vowing to kill me on sight. Now if you have anything against me, here's as fine a chance as you could ask to settle it. You have your belt and gun on and I mine, nobody's holding you, and we're alone. Bat an eye or make a move, and it will be the quickest man for a scalp."

His eye wavered a bit, and I knew I had him on the run. Then presently he grumbled:

"Say, Ol' Man Kid, mine was jest *nothin'* but whisky talk down t' Cheyenne. She don't go, see? Yu shore handed me anything but prittys over on th' Laramie, but I reckon I got no more 'n was a comin' t' me for undersizin' y'ur play. Reckon 'fore I tackle another tende'foot kid I'll set up long

'nough nights t' larn whether his system is fullest o' deuces or aces ! "

" Quite sure you've no kick, Mack ? " I queried.

" None but that little lovin' one yu give me on th' Laramie, 'n' I allow I was due for it," he half-grinned.

" Well, so long then, Mack," I said, and trotted slowly ahead, half-turned in my saddle to make sure he did not change his mind.

CHAPTER SIX

Wintering among Rustlers

I returned to my winter camp on Cottonwood in a fierce mid-December blizzard, the first of the season, the temperature so low that little snow was falling, but the wind so high that it lifted and filled the air with what seemed almost solid masses of the last fall, that, driving horizontally before a thirty or forty mile wind, made it nearly impossible for man and horse to face it.

But my mount, " Alizan," a stout-hearted, heavy-muscled sorrel half-breed, struggled bravely against the bitter blasts sweeping the ridges and wallowed stubbornly through the drifts filling the hollows, and finally, more by his own instinct than my guidance, brought me safely to the ranch door a little after sundown.

And lucky it was we came up squarely in front of the eighteen-foot dugout, for little enough of it showed above the all-mantling snow ; a narrow ribbon of light outlined the loosely set door ; a grayish column of smoke, faintly gold-tinted by its mother flames, rose from the great chimney and swept swiftly away south-east into the night—that was all.

Howl and bluster as it might without, within all was good cheer and rude comfort.

Big, dry juniper logs were roaring with joy of the light and warmth they were bringing us; in a corner of the fireplace a kettle of dried apples stewed and quietly simmered, cuddled contentedly alongside a coffee pot, whose contents bubbled riotously in pride of its amber strength; across the fire a pot-bellied Dutch oven and its glowing crest of live coals in characteristic stolid silence wrought out its task of producing us a crisp brown loaf; no little annoyed, doubtless, by the half score slices of fat bacon sizzling and sputtering angrily near by.

The dugout I found transformed. I had left it a month before empty of all furniture, the mud chinking on the walls scarce dry. During my absence the boys had furnished it—not sumptuously, to be sure, but fully and comfortably.

A table and stools the axes had served to produce out of poles and hewn slabs; four stout bedstead frames had been built against the walls, two to right and two to left of the door, and a rawhide slung by its four corners to each of the bedstead frames made a mattress not entirely devoid of flexibility; three or four tomato can cases nailed to the wall served as pantry; wooden hooks above each bunk held the rifles and belts; the space beneath the bunks served as storeroom and was packed with spare supplies; a bunch of willow twigs bound tightly about an end of a pole made a tolerable broom, and the tawny skin of a big mountain lion (prey to Tex's rifle) lay as a rug before the bunk held inviolate for me.

And roughly fashioned, with no tools other than axe and saw, made without scrap of lumber, iron or glass as were the dugout and its fittings, proud as Lucifer was I of this the first house I ever owned, and happy in it as in any more pretentious that since has sheltered me.

Tex I found well but worried—badly worried.

"Pow'ful glad t' see yu back, Ol' Man; done needed yu fo' a week," he greeted.

"What's the trouble, Tex?" I asked; "Indians been in on you?"

"Nop, nary Injun; no' sign."

"Any rustlers out brand burning?"

"Nop!"

"Lost any horses?"

"Nop!"

"Coyote chewed up your pet rawhide riata?"

"Nop!"

"'Balaam'" (a little Spanish mule and Tex's favourite mount for range riding) "gone lame?"

"Nop!"

"Well, then, whatever *is* the trouble, Tex?"

"Hell's own plenty o' trouble; that thar Ol' Man Mack on Muskrat Creek's plumb crazy, 'n' unsafe t' be loose 'mong whites; shore t' do some o' us up or butt his fool haid off agin a rock; ought t' be *es*corted back t' his folks 'n' took care of."

Mack & Peers were our nearest neighbours, small ranchmen living eighteen miles away, whose acquaintance I had made shortly before going East in November.

Peers was a fine type of Pike County Missourian, a keen, alert, capable, all-round frontiersman and cowman.

Mack was a man of education and polish, plainly well bred, past fifty, carefully grammatical of speech as well as one could judge from the little he said, for he was quiet and reserved to the point of downright taciturnity—a sad-faced, gentle man who tended the ranch while his partner Peers rode the range, evidently nursing memories of some grief or trouble from which he there sought exile amid rude surroundings in which he always remained a pathetic misfit.

Thus it was with the greatest surprise I queried :

" Whatever is the matter with Mr. Mack, Tex ? "

" Jest adzactly what I tells yu—crazy as a locoed steer."

" So ? Has he been making any war plays ? "

" Nix ; not yet ; but he's *shore* to—that's whatever. Ain't at hisself at all."

" How do you know ? How did you find it out, Tex ? "

" Wall, it's thisaway. 'Bout a week ago, while me 'n' ' Balaam ' was out sign ridin', we struck a bunch o' strays strung out for Muskrat, 'n' it come night 'fore we got 'em headed and swung back toward th' home range.

" It was so late, I 'lowed me 'n' th' mule would see if we could git t' stay all night at Mack & Peers's camp. So up I rides 'n' hollers, 'n' gits down.

" Hearin' me holler, out come ol' Mack hisself, 'n' right off he axes me t' onsaddle 'n' put th' mule in th' shed ; which-all suited ' Balaam ' 'n' me special, for a nor'easter was blowin' we'd a had to go quarterin' agin t' git home that thar was no sorta show t' git overhet in.

" When I got in th' cabin, thar was ol' Mack putterin' 'bout th' fireplace, cookin' supper. He give me a stool in th' chimley corner, 'n' then tol' me Peers had went t' th' Fort for th' mail, 'n' 'lowed t' stay thar all night—wanted t' tank up a few on red eye, I reckon, at Bullock's store.

" 'N' that was jest nachally *all* th' news I got out o' Ol' Man Mack th' hull night—never said another dod-blamed word but ' yes ' 'n' ' no ' until th' next mornin', when, by strainin' his system horrible, he did git t' give up a ' good-bye ' when I rode off.

" She was a hell o' a unsociable evenin', yu can bet yu'r *alce* on that.

" Feeling as vis'tur it was up t' me t' be entertainin', I tried t' talk, by making *re*marks 'bout th' weather, 'n' Injuns, 'n'

rustlers, 'n' how th' Platte was froze so nigh solid, 'n' snow layin' so thick, thar was mighty little fo' stock t' eat o' drink, makin' 'em shore t' come out pore 'n' weak in th' spring.

" But fo' all the *re*sponse it fetched out o' him, I might as well a been talkin' t' a bunch o' *re*mains.

" His listeners 'peared t' be workin' all right, fo' sometimes he'd loosen up t' th' extent o' a ' yes ' o' ' nop,' but that was all

" 'N' yet he was mighty kind like—give me tobacco 'n' papers, 'n' books t' look at. Books! He was sartenly hell on books—had th' dod-burned little ol' cabin full o' them, 'nough t' run all the deestrict schools in th' hull state o' Texas. Books! He had long ones 'n' short ones, fat ones 'n' thin ones, some in leather scabbards 'n' some jest wrapt in paper, lots o' them with pictures o' more d——n queer things I never heerd of than I could tell yu 'bout in a year. Books! Why, honest, I reckon that ol' feller's got more books than anybody else in the world, 'n' has got so used t' gittin' all his back talk outen *them* that it's jest got t' be onhandy fo' him t' use his tongue wi' humans.

" Wall, finally he gits supper ready, 'n' we eats. 'N' she was a shore pea-warmer o' a supper, good as women-folks's cookin'; raised hot bread 'n' a puddin' that 'd' make a puncher jest nachally want t' marry 'n' live wi' th' cook that made it.

" After supper I smokes 'n' smokes, while he plumb loses his ol' self in a book.

" Finally, come bed-time, he give me a nice bunk, 'n' I pulls off my coat, hat, spurs 'n' boots, 'n' gits intu th' blankets.

" Then what 'n hell does yu allow that ol' feller did? You'd never guess in a thousand year! 'Fore that I thought he was jest queer o' his ways, but when he did *that*, I made so

sure he was plumb dangerous crazy it scarit me so bad I never shet an eye th' hull night long."

"Nonsense, Tex," I interrupted, "Mack isn't crazy."

"Crazy!" he resumed, "it's me tellin' yu he's crazy as a d——d bedbug, 'n' I got th' goods t' prove it; fo' right thar in th' cabin, befo' me, he pulls off every last stitch o' clothes he had on, *'n' then he up 'n' puts on his ol' carcass a great long white woman's dress reachin' plumb down t' his feet, 'n' goes t' bed in it.* Yes, sir, that's jest what he did; I'll swear t' it; 'n' I reckon *now* yu-all 'll admit he's crazy!"

Dear old brush-bred Tex had never even heard of such a thing as a nightgown, and I never was quite sure I succeeded in fully convincing him that no inconsiderable part of humanity always so habited themselves for their nightly repose! Certain it was that he never got it out of his head that Mack was an unsafe intellectual freak.

The next day I dropped into ranch routine.

Our most important work was daily range riding, to throw back into the range any cattle straying from it, and to make sure no depredations by Indians or rustlers were going on.

Our position was unusually exposed. At the time throughout its long sweep south-east from the Sweetwater in Central Wyoming to Blue Creek in Nebraska, there were only three herds north of the North Platte River—Mack & Peers's outfit on Muskrat, Pratt & Ferris twenty-five miles east of me on Rawhide, and mine on Cottonwood, all of us moved in that same season.

To the north two hundred and thirty miles lay the then new mining camp of Deadwood, in the heart of the Black Hills, with no intervening habitation of white men save the stock-tenders' cabins, twelve to eighteen miles apart, on the main stage road from Cheyenne.

In those days in isolated Deadwood money was often

five per cent. a month, flour one hundred dollars a sack, and beef anything its possessor had nerve enough to ask for it.

Thus our exposed herds were a great temptation to the lawless.

Within a week after my return we discovered our "Three Crow" brand () had been spotted for an easy mark, chiefly, I suppose, as the property of a tenderfoot.

First we discovered several head of cattle showing brand disfigurement, the first two "crows" made into "B's," and the third into an "8," thus ().

The disfigurement was so plainly obvious that it seemed evident the rustlers planned to run a blazer on us by undertaking to cut them on the spring round-up under cover of a gun bluff.

Later we came on little branding fires in the rough hill country where they had been at work on our cows with their running-irons, several times when the ashes were still hot, and the rustlers gone barely an hour.

But trail them we could not, for their horses' hoofs were heavily padded with gunny-sacks and the country was so rocky that even lynx-eyed Tex could not follow them.

Perhaps this brand burning in the heart of our range was only a ruse. In any event, we were so keen to catch the marauders red-handed at their work that for several weeks we neglected our north boundary sign riding to scout for the thieves.

Thus it happened that late one afternoon early in February two punchers, who had gone out that morning to ride our north line, dashed up to the ranch on trembling, steaming horses, with the news they had found a trail, about two weeks' old, of seventy odd head of cattle driven away into the north by three men.

Plainly they could have but one destination, Deadwood,

where, if driven at top speed, as they must have been, they were due to arrive the very day we discovered the theft.

Thus the only sure chance of saving them lay in a dash through to Deadwood by stage-coach before they were butchered and the hides safely disposed of.

At once I decided to take the night coach north, due at Cañon Springs station, two miles from the ranch, at 9 p.m.

It was a bitter night, the thermometer forty to fifty degrees below zero. That, however, did not matter, for I rode over to the station comfortably bundled in arctics, goatskin leggings, and buffalo overcoat, with a spare buffalo robe for my lap.

Presently we heard the thud of hoofs and the crunch of wheels far away through the chill, still night; then two lights rose like great stars above a hill crest and dimly outlined the team; then came the driver's "Yip! Yip! Yip!" call to the stock-tender, and in rolled the old thorough-brace coach and its puffing, steaming team of six, with old Tom Cooper on the box—Cooper, famous half-breed driver, who lost his life a few years later, by the failure of his brakes on a Leadville grade.

The team was quickly changed, while Tom and I had a drink, and then into the coach I climbed, Tom mounted his box, gathered up the ribbons, cracked his whip, and into their collars sprang the fresh team at a pace that set the old coach pitching, tossing, and pounding like a bark in a storm.

The coach held only one other passenger, settled in a corner of the rear seat. I took the corner beside him, wrapped my legs in the spare robe, and composed myself for a nap.

But sleep was not for me—immediately. By the way he loosely rolled to the pitching of the coach and by the odours emanating from his corner, it was soon made plain to me my coach mate was comfortably drunk.

And I had little more than time to make the discovery before he nudged me sharply in the ribs and gurgled:

"Shay, pardner, t'day 's Shunday. Ze Holy Sabbath! Don' you sink we oughta do shumthing t' cel'brate th' day?"

It was, in truth, Sunday, and I agreed with him, but suggested we were at the moment lacking all usual facilities for any sort of orthodox or unorthodox observance of that day. But this did not in the least non-plus my bibulous neighbour.

"Tell you wha' we'll do," he answered; "I'll betchu th' best d——n gallon 'r whisky we can buy in Deadwood that I can shing more d——n Shunday School songs 'n you can, shingin' turn 'bout."

While startling and, under the terms proposed, more of a desecration than an observance of the day, it struck me that, partly as a matter of pride and partly of duty, I ought to accept his bet.

He was three-fourths drunk, I cold sober, and also some years shorter removed from Sunday School days than he. He would doubtless sing in a wanton spirit, but I could sing in a devout, so long as my repertoire held out.

So I accepted, and we shook hands on the wager.

Courteously conceding the opening to me, I sang the only Sunday School hymn I felt certain I knew from start to finish, "Shall We Gather at the River?"

Finished, he continued, appropriately it seemed to me, with "A Charge to Keep I Have," and never missed a line or word, though often driven sadly out of time by interloping hiccoughs.

His turn done, he mumbled:

"Zalmighty dry work tryin' t' keep Shunday, pardner; le's take a drink."

And, thinking the sooner 'twas over the sooner I'd sleep, we drank.

Then it was up to me, and I gave him, in my best form, two verses of " From Greenland's Icy Mountains," all I could remember, and stopped, certain I had lost on the second round.

But instead, cheerfully oblivious to the paucity of verses, he made many a vocal stumble through the measure of " I Hunger and I Thirst," but diligently skipped no lines.

And out of deference to the theme of his song, I consented to take another drink.

Here I caught my second wind, though I did not hold it long, and contrived to finish all three verses of " Watchman, Tell Us of the Night."

Next he promptly responded with some long-whiskered old residenter of a hymn, gabbling honestly through from its beginning to its end.

And so we went on for more than an hour, I soon driven into snatches of operatic airs and comic songs, any scrap of musical flotsam still adrift in the current of my memory, he sticking faithfully to the text if not the tune of some hoary hymn.

Memory served him well to the last—to the last drop in the bottle, when after two or three false starts at " Labouring and Heavy Laden," he suddenly dropped into a snore more rhythmic than his song.

Late the next morning, while the team was ploughing slowly through the drifts along the valley of Old Woman's Fork, he awoke, notably the worse for the preceding evening's service, and hazy about its happenings, but cheerful.

" Pardner," he remarked, " allow me to hand you my respects and acknowledgments. I sure thought I was the chief as a hymn whooper, but you beat me so easy and done

it so hard it would appear to the undersigned you must have spent most of your life setting atop of a Sunday School organ. The gallon is yours, and the cost mine ! "

And when, to spare his pride of memory, I delicately hinted that I had been forced to make excursions wide afield of any hymn book ever printed, and, therefore, was myself the loser of the bet, he studied a minute or two, and then blurted out :

" Well, I *will* be d——d ; pardner, Deadwood gets to sell two gallons, and one of them's yours ! "

All day and night we trundled on, crunching through the snow—across the divide to Crazy Woman's Fork, down its valley to Lightning Creek, down Lance to the Cheyenne River, crossing the Cheyenne on the ice and climbing toward the south-western buttresses of the Black Hills.

A little after daylight we breakfasted at Jenny's Stockade, and the second afternoon made Deadwood.

At the stations along the route I had made inquiry for my quarry, but they had not been seen. Later I learned that they had swung farther east and gone in over the Custer City trail.

By evening I had all the information I needed. The rustlers had arrived near Deadwood three days ahead of me. Three men had brought the cattle in, the leader (a bad man with the misleading name of Goodfellow !) had sold them to a local butcher, and the butcher had driven them out to his winter camp on Whitewood Gulch twenty-five miles north.

Goodfellow and his partners had jumped the town the night of the sale, in what direction I could then find no one to tell me.

That night I turned in early at the Grand Central Hotel tired and sore from the two days and nights' pounding in the coach. My room was narrow as a cell, little more than the width of the single bed.

I was that tired I was wakeful, and, to make sleep more difficult, rats were making an awful racket, apparently in the wall opposite the bed. Getting one of my heavy boots by the strap, I struck a violent blow at the wall, when boot and arm disappeared through the cotton sheeting and paper that alone formed the partition, my boot hitting the sleeper in the next room a crack in the face that took all my eloquence to satisfactorily explain.

Shortly after daylight the next morning I routed out the butcher from the lodgings where I had located him the night before.

Naturally he was anything but glad to meet me, and began by disputing my identity and authority as owner, for the only credentials I carried were wrapped up in whatever modest measure of gall I possessed.

Indeed, he indulged in some very plain war talk, and urged me to go where the climate was so far the reverse of Deadwood's I doubted if I could stand the shock of the change.

Moreover, I wanted my cattle, or their price, so I stuck to him, and finally finished by persuading him it would be helpful to his health to breakfast with me at the Grand Central and saddle up and ride out with me to Whitewood to examine the cattle.

It was a lonely ride, that twenty-five miles, over a little-used trail across thickly timbered hills and gulches, a ride I doubtless never would have finished had I not required him to ride ahead of me from its beginning to its end.

And a sad pity it was I had so little time to give to the local scenery, for it was altogether the most beautiful I can recall.

The day before there had been a rise in temperature, followed by a heavy sleet storm through the night that had sheeted all nature in crystal. Then the wind had shifted

into the north and the temperature had dropped to fifty-two degrees below zero, and so held all day, leaving the air still as death, not the faintest whiff of a breeze.

It was a savage fairy land we traversed.

Gaunt rocks, tall pines, broad balsams, slender birches, yellow grass all ice-incrusted, gleaming now a shimmering white and then reflecting every delicate rainbow tint, each separate pinnacle, twig and blade a crystal-clad miracle of beauty to make one pause in admiring awe.

But with eyes glued to every move of the grim figure in a great bearskin coat jogging along at a dog trot ahead of me, all I saw of the scenery was what lay ahead straight of me or could be caught out of the tail of the eye, for I well knew he would welcome half a chance to beef me and leave me on the trail.

We reached his camp in Whitewood about noon.

The two men occupying the camp looked tough as the wild range life usually makes men naturally of a reckless, evil bent, and after the first glance from their employer, their lowering looks showed plainly I had been tipped to them as an enemy.

They proposed dinner, but the situation was one so little conducive to comfortable dining and the effective digestion of one's food that I vetoed the dinner and insisted on riding up a near-by gulch where the cattle were ranging.

Indeed, the trio to me looked so far from good I offered six separate arguments, each tightly bound in neat brass covers, why it would be better if they left all their arms at the camp, arguments so weighty that, preferring to see rather than to feel their force, they complied.

Then we rode out and bunched the little herd, and there among them, sure enough, were no less than seventy-six of my " Three Crow " cows !

So far so good, but now I had to make a get-away, for the solitude of Whitewood Gulch was no convenient place to debate restitution or settlement.

This, however, proved fairly easy of arrangement, for at my request my butcher friend kindly consented to tie on his saddle the two rifles and two six-shooters belonging to his men and pack them back to Deadwood, and the men were good enough to unsaddle and turn loose their two ponies, leaving them free to take a good rest before undertaking the all-day task of trying afoot to round up and catch fresh mounts!

Thus it happened that I was able to follow my butcher friend back into Deadwood secure against a rear attack or a wide circle ahead of us and an ambush of his men.

There was not much conversation during our return ride, for night was nearing, and I so little liked a prospect of the butcher for a bed-mate that most of the way we hit the trail at a lope.

Occasional slacking of pace to rest our horses, however, made me opportunity for a few remarks he took as so pointed that before we parted that night he had paid me about twice what the seventy-six cows were worth on my own range—and yet had a bargain at prevailing local prices that easily doubled his total investment in "Three Crow" beef.

A few weeks later Goodfellow and Jack Handley were run into their holes and the holes plugged up—permanently; the third man escaped to Texas—also permanently.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A FINISH FIGHT FOR A BIRTHRIGHT

To behold the inroads of autumn upon the foliage of a noble forest; to watch a rose fade and see its withered petals fall

to earth; to see a beast in its death throes; to witness the last agony of a fellow-mortal, even though he be a stranger and nothing to you in the world—any of these is a sufficiently saddening incident to a man of average susceptibility.

Happily enough, therefore, it has come to few men to witness the final dissolution of a people, even though that people be a savage tribe every page of whose history is dark with deeds of barbarism. Such, however, has been my lot, and the scenes, incidents, and characters of the dread spectacle are as fresh on my mind to-day as if they were of yesterday.

In the autumn of '77 I bought my first herd of cattle at Cooper Lake on Laramie Plains, west of the main range of the Rockies. The country lying between the Union Pacific Railway and the Platte was then fairly well stocked and the best ranges occupied. But, up to that time, the North Platte River had stood the dead line between the Sioux and the ranchmen, a dead line never crossed by ranchmen, except in occasional trailing parties in pursuit (and usually a hopeless pursuit) of stolen horses taken by the raiding Sioux.

All of the two thirds of Wyoming lying to the north of the North Platte River, all of the two thirds of Montana lying to the east of a line drawn through Bozeman and Fort Benton, all of the two Dakotas west of Fort Pierre and Yankton, and all of the north-west quarter of the State of Nebraska—a vast area of roughly three hundred thousand square miles, greater in extent than all of New England with the States of New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and half of Kentucky thrown in—held no white man's habitation, save the little camp of miners in the Black Hills, and had for its only tenants nomad bands of Cheyennes and of Ogallala, Brulé and Uncapapa Sioux, the ancient lords of this most noble manor.

To be sure, a treaty had been had and the Sioux title

proper was recognised by the Government over none of this territory excepting a part of the two Dakotas lying west of the Missouri and north of the White River. Thus, technically, the rest of this great area was open to occupation and settlement, but it was still ranged from end to end by war parties resentful of the treaty terms, which had taken from them the best-beloved part of their domain, the Black Hills, and limited them to the wastes of the Dakota Bad Lands.

With the country to the south of the Platte more or less crowded with ranches, it was plain the time had come when seekers for attractive free ranges must venture north of the Platte into the Sioux domain ; and bar one ranch located by Pratt & Ferris immediately on the Platte River to the east of Fort Laramie, I was the first man to carry a herd of cattle into the heart of the Sioux country, and there locate and permanently maintain a ranch.

Starting from Cooper Lake on Laramie Plains rather late in the autumn of '77, trailing through the Rockies, by Collin's Cut Off, to the Sabille, thence down to the Laramie River, and down the Laramie to Butch Phillips's ranch, I there crossed to the Platte River, and we were fortunate enough to arrive in time to swim it the very night before it froze over.

With the cold weather come on, it became imperative to go into winter quarters, and we wintered on the Cottonwood, twelve miles north-west of Fort Laramie.

In October, '77, over twelve thousand Ogallala Sioux were removed from their old agency on White River, a mile east of Fort Robinson, to Bijou Hill, on the Missouri, only to be moved back a year later to what still remains their present agency, between Wounded Knee and White Clay Creeks.

In the months of January and February, accompanied by two men, I made a scouting trip to the north and east down the Niobrara to Pine Creek, crossing north to White River and

thence back by the head of White River to my winter camp on the Cottonwood, a journey of sixty days without meeting a single white man!

With my future location decided by this trip, so soon as the cattle could be gathered in the spring, I moved one hundred miles north of the Platte River, and took up and occupied White River from its head down to Fort Robinson, twenty miles, and also twenty miles of the Niobrara, averaging fourteen miles to the south of the White River range.

This territory embraced the very heart of what had been the favourite home camping ground of the main band of Ogallala Sioux for generations. Indeed, the head of White River was, bar none, the most beautiful country I have ever seen in the West, a rolling hill country, open timbered with pines like a park; with springs of clear, cold water breaking out in almost every gulch; with tall, white limestone cliffs to north and south that gave the valley perfect shelter against winter storms, and all the land matted thick with juicy buffalo grass.

The home ranch I located on Dead Man's Creek, a small tributary of the White River five miles south of Fort Robinson.

While chosen only for its value as a ranch site, this location proved the most fortunate choice I could have made. The Sioux name of the Creek was Wi-nogi-waka-pala, meaning "Ghost Creek," or "Dead Man's Creek," and we later learned that the Sioux had such a superstitious dread of it that no Indian ever ventured near Dead Man's Creek at night. This superstition came from the tradition of a camp of Indians on the Dead Man many years before which was attacked by a contagion so deadly that not enough living were left to bury the dead. Thus it happened that, while we could never abate our watchfulness, no night raid upon this ranch or the

horse herd ranging near was ever made by the Sioux, while ranches far to the south of mine suffered often and severely.

Fort Robinson was then a little two-company garrison, which had been built at the close of the Sitting Bull campaign of 1876, at the junction of Soldier Creek and White River, built really to help to awe and hold in check the restless Ogallala Sioux, whose agency then lay a mile down the river from the Fort.

But this story deals with the Sioux only incidentally.

The people whose virtual extermination I came to witness were the Northern Cheyennes, belonging to Dull Knife's band, captured on Chadron Creek by Capt. J. B. Johnson, of the Third Cavalry, in October, '78, and held as prisoners in barracks at Fort Robinson until January, 1897.

The band numbered one hundred and forty-nine people, of whom forty were warriors. Their capture by Johnson was the closing scene of the most remarkable campaign in the history of Indian warfare.

The Cheyennes were natives of these same plains and mountains, highlanders whose hereditary domain embraced the magnificent ranges of the Big Horn and the Black Hills; here through generations were they born, here their dead were buried. Allied more or less with the Sioux, intermarried with them to some extent, here they dwelt and maintained themselves against all comers in a veritable aboriginal's paradise, the plains alive with buffalo and antelope, the mountains full of deer, elk, mountain-sheep and bear, the streams swarming with fish, and everywhere a thick carpet of juicy buffalo grass that kept their ponies fat as seals. Numerically weaker than the Sioux, they were an infinitely bolder and more warlike race.

But at last, in 1876, came the fatal day that sooner or later arrived for all Indian titles—that which the Pale Face

most covets was discovered in the very heart of their domain; gold was found in the Black Hills, and miners began to stream in. This part of the story was well told by General Brisbane (then commanding Fort Ellis) in an interview with a newspaper correspondent:

"That the Indians do not make war unless pressed, you, as a resident here since 1870, must admit. You remember my first operation here after my arrival in 1876? I allude to the rescue of the garrison at Fort Pease, at the mouth of the Big Horn. Some forty whites had left Bozeman and located in the heart of Sitting Bull's country, and without any authority in the world had built a fort there. The Sioux and Cheyennes attacked, and were on the point of capturing it, when the besieged men appealed to me for aid. Sitting Bull had one thousand five hundred warriors, and we had only four hundred men, but we hastened to relieve the settlement. He could have beaten us, but, doubtless thinking it best to permit the removal of the cause of the trouble, he drew off, only too glad to see the departure of the intruders. I had hardly again reached Fort Ellis, when I was notified of the approach of General Gibbon with seven companies of infantry from one direction, and General Terry, and Custer with his regiment, from another. We all returned to Sitting Bull's country—then the Big Horn and Rosebud fights occurred."

At the first encroachment on their reservation the Indians had petitioned the Government for protection. As usual, the petition was "read and referred." Meantime their country was being invaded. Small parties of venturesome miners were coming into the Black Hills from Fort Pierre on the east, Cheyenne and Sidney on the south, and Bozeman on the west.

For a time the Indians waited patiently for the Government to interfere in their behalf. Had they considered the long, shameful story of the treatment of the red race by the white, they probably would not have waited so long. Instead of help, more miners came.

At last, losing hope of any aid, they went the way all people go in one manner or another directly they find themselves being despoiled—they went to war.

War parties attacked the trespassing whites. Quickly the wires brought to the East stories of Indian atrocities, and soon two military columns were set in motion to crush those whom they should rather have been sent to protect.

This was the origin of the '76 campaign, in which the gallant Custer and his brave Seventh were wiped out, and which ended in the defeat of Sitting Bull and the capture of Crazy Horse's Sioux and Dull Knife's Cheyennes.

Then we had a treaty, and the Sioux and Cheyennes "ceded" the Black Hills to the Government. With proper prompt action in the beginning, this "cession" might have been negotiated with honour to the Government and satisfaction to the Indians, and the Seventh spared their terrible sacrifice.

In rude old feudal days when they took a man's land, they usually hacked off his head. But the rude old feudal customs, convenient though they may be, quite shock modern sensibilities. Thus the then-ruling humanitarians of the Indian Bureau decided that Dull Knife's Cheyennes, who were the boldest and most independent of the lot, should be removed six hundred miles south to the Indian Territory, a country and climate with no pleasing prospect for them unless of an early and certain translation—by disease and death—to the Happy Hunting Grounds which represent the future paradise of the red man.

So away they were marched in 1877 to Fort Reno, a grim band of warriors, squaws and papooses, their robes, *parflèches* and other rude equipment trailing on *travois*.

Their war chief was Dull Knife; two senior chiefs, Old Crow and Wild Hog; the junior war chief, Little Wolf.

Dull Knife had a history worth telling, but suffice it here to say that all army officers who encountered him held high esteem for his generalship and indomitable courage.

Unaccustomed to the enervating climate of the south, they rapidly fell its victims. Easy prey to the fevers there prevalent, it was not long before there was scarcely a lodge free from the shrill death chant of mourners and the dull roar of the medicine tom-tom.

Out of two hundred and thirty-five bucks who arrived at Fort Reno in August, 1877, twenty-eight died within a twelvemonth, while the mortality among the women and children was greater still.

The head men of the tribe appealed to the Government. They pleaded as men can only plead for life. They showed that they were dying like sheep on the new reservation. They begged to be permitted to return to their old home in the highlands of the north. They promised to be obedient and peaceful if allowed to return.

To be sure, it was an Indian promise, and the Government had gotten in the bad habit of discrediting Indian promises, notwithstanding the indisputable fact of history that, once frankly pledged, the Indian faith has rarely been broken.

Therefore their prayer was denied, and they were told to content themselves where they were.

As a piece of humanity, this decision was like telling a well man to sleep with a leper; as public policy, like courting war; as justice, like robbing a man of his home, and then compelling him to dwell roofless in an atmosphere of contagion.

However, it was the decision, a decision from which the Cheyennes possessed only one right of appeal—the appeal to arms—and they took it.

This was the *raison d'être* of the Cheyenne outbreak of '78.

It was a campaign begun early in September of 1878, far south on the banks of the Canadian River, in the (then) Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, and only finished when, late in October, Little Wolf, with the younger and stronger members of Dull Knife's band, although constantly pursued and intercepted by troops, had successfully fought his way through four great military lines of interception—which included all the troops the War Department was able to put in the field against him—to the complete escape and safety of a junction with Sitting Bull's Uncapapa Sioux in the British northwest territory, one thousand miles to the north; and when Dull Knife and the elders of the tribe, entirely spent of strength and ammunition, were captured in the Niobrara sand hills of Northern Nebraska, six hundred miles from their starting-point—a campaign that for generalship and strategy, for boldness of conception and sheer, desperate, reckless courage of execution, surpasses in every detail even the famous outbreak of the Nez Percés under Chief Joseph, or of the Apaches under Victoria; a campaign inspired by a holy purpose no man who knows the love of fatherland can gainsay, if ever warfare had a holy purpose in this world.

To be sure they left a trail red with the blood of many an innocent victim, gray with the ashes of many a plundered ranch and farmhouse. Still they were only savages, fighting according to the traditions of their race.

Dull Knife Jumps the Reservation

It was the ninth of September, 1878.

Night had fallen over the Valley of the Canadian, one of

those clear, bright nights of early autumn on the plains when the stars seem hovering about the tops of the cottonwoods. The moon was nearly full, for the savage, much of whose strategy is learned from the wild beast, chooses the night—and always a moonlight night—for his forays. No Indian ever sought the war-path in the dark of the moon.

The Cheyenne camp was pitched in the valley, at some distance from the fort.

The tall tepees, gleaming gray in the moonlight, stood in clusters in a narrow belt of cottonwoods that lined the stream.

Usually at this hour an Indian village was bright with the flames of camp fires and noisy with romping children, above whose piping voices from time to time rose the weird, monotonous chant of some old folk-lore song of the race, recounting the old-world story of dangers doughtily withstood by heroes gone long before; groups of warriors lounged about the camp fires, the elders spinning yarns of the chase and the raid, stories of hunting, of war, and of love that stirred the young bucks mightily.

But this night, while there was an unwonted activity in the camp, there was no noise.

The great herd of ponies, usually grazing out on the divide where the juicy buffalo grass grows thick, had been quietly brought into the camp.

Men, women, and youths were rapidly but silently lariating their mounts and adjusting their rude bridles and saddles.

This finished, they attacked the tepees. Tall, grim, blanketed figures bent quickly to the work. The buffalo robe or canvas covering of the tepees was soon stripped off the poles, rolled and packed on the ponies.

The tepee poles were left standing, for the preparations making were as well for a flight as a fight. The column must

travel light; no needless *impedimenta* could be taken, and there would be no time to set up tepees on this march.

The few poor stores at their disposal were soon stowed in *parflèches* and tied on the pack animals. Then the column was ready to move.

Papooses were quickly slung in the slack of the blanket on the mothers' backs and the mothers mounted; the children were tossed up astride behind their mothers; the bucks tightened their belts, slung their arms, and swung swiftly into the saddle; and the column, in loose, irregular order, with seldom more than two or three riding abreast, moved softly out of camp, headed northward on as desperate a sortie as forlorn hope ever drove men to.

Dawn came at last. A sleepy sentinel on post yawned, rubbed his eyes, and walked to the edge of the bluff, where he could look down on the Cheyenne camp.

But presto! the camp had disappeared. Only the ghost of a camp remained, for where had stood the gleaming canvas of the tepees naught appeared but the gaunt pole skeletons of these primitive habitations.

The sentry quickly called the sergeant of the guard; he, the officer of the day; he, the commanding officer.

The "assembly" was promptly sounded. A patrol was ordered out, a patrol which soon reported a deserted village and a trail leading straight away across the divide toward the north! The story was told in trooper's brusque phrase:

"Dull Knife's jumped the reservation."

No time was lost. Within half an hour two troops of cavalry rode out of Fort Reno on the trail.

The chase was on.

And what a hopeless chase none but an old trooper or frontiersman familiar with Indian methods and troopers' limitations can realise.

The trooper was always at a disadvantage. He had only his single mount, accustomed to high grain feeding and stable care, that quickly went footsore and lost condition in such a pursuit. Once afoot, the trooper could not forage on the country for a fresh mount.

A band of Indians, on the other hand, always carried with them a herd of loose ponies. They rode at great speed, they rode on and yet on till their mounts fell from fatigue. The throats of the fagged beasts were then quickly cut, to prevent their falling into the hands of pursuers, fresh mounts caught, and the flight resumed. Their own supply of fresh horses exhausted, the band then raided ranches and farms for others.

By these means, extraordinary marches were made. At the time of the last outbreak of Geronimo from the San Carlos Reservation, his first march covered one hundred and forty miles without a halt!

This small initial pursuing column was the least difficulty Dull Knife had to contend with. The outbreak had instantly been telegraphed by Colonel Mizner, commanding at Fort Reno, through the usual official channels, to the War Department. Dull Knife's skill and daring as a leader were only too well known to the Department. Instantly the whole available force of the United States Army was set in motion to effect his capture. Within a few days no less than two thousand troops, seasoned veterans trained in the great Sioux-Cheyenne War of 1876, had taken the field against Dull Knife. To accomplish this, three departments of the army were drawn upon; and from Cantonment in the Big Horn Mountains of Montana to Camp Supply in the Indian Territory, from Omaha to Salt Lake, grim columns were moving to crush or subdue this handful of hostiles.

General Pope, commanding the Department of the Missouri, directed the immediate pursuit.

September 12th, 1878, he reported to General Sheridan :

" The following dispositions have been made to intercept the Northern Cheyennes : One hundred mounted infantrymen leave by special train to-morrow for Fort Wallace to head off the Indians if they cross the railroad east or west of that post. Two companies of infantry leave Hays this evening to take post at two noted crossings of Indians on the Kansas Pacific between Hays and Wallace. One infantry company from Dodge is posted on the railroad west of that point. Two cavalry companies from Reno are close on the Indians, and will be joined by the cavalry company from Supply. Colonel Lewis will assume command of them as soon as they reach the vicinity of Dodge. The troops at Fort Lyon are ordered to watch the country east and west of that post. . . . All are ordered to attack the Indians wherever found unless they surrender at once, in which case they are to be dismounted and disarmed. Whatever precautions are possible should be taken on the line of the Platte."

The same day witnessed similar activity in the Department of the Platte. Four companies, under Captains Burrowes, Bowman, Brisbin, and Trotter, of the Fourth, Ninth, and Fourteenth Infantry, were ordered to rendezvous at Sidney, Nebraska, on the U.P.R.R., whence scouts were to be kept out on watch for the hostiles, and a special train was kept in constant readiness to carry the troops east or west.

September 14th General Crook hurried westward over the Union Pacific to direct operations, and Major T. T. Thornburg took command of the troops at Sidney.

Meantime, the Cheyennes were pushing forward night and day, stealing horses, ravaging the country, and killing all who came in their path. Notwithstanding the presence of their

women and children, they were making fifty to seventy miles a day, and the pursuers, struggle as they might, seemed to be on a hopeless stern chase.

It was believed at the time in the Department of the Platte that Dull Knife had been in communication with Sitting Bull, and that a consolidation of forces had been planned. This sufficiently points the high estimate placed by experienced army officers of the day upon the daring and generalship of Dull Knife; for at the time Sitting Bull and his band of hostiles were in the mountains between Calgary and McLeod, in the British North-west Territory, one thousand miles from Fort Reno!

The hostiles were reported checked by the troops at a point twenty miles from Fort Wallace, Kansas, on the 16th of September. This, however, proved a mistake, for on the 18th a detachment of Dull Knife's band fought a desperate engagement with two companies of the Fourth Cavalry, and fifteen cowboys near Dodge City. In the fight several Indians were captured, and many were wounded on both sides. But the Cheyennes succeeded in beating off the troops and resumed their flight to the north-west.

Of their mastery in this engagement they left behind them terrible evidence in the smoking ruins of several houses no more than three miles from Dodge City.

Notwithstanding the cordon of troops stretched along the Kansas Pacific Railway from Fort Wallace eastward, on the 20th it was reported that the main band of the Cheyennes had skilfully eluded the troops, had crossed the railway, and were rapidly advancing against the second line of military interception on the Union Pacific Railway, north of the South Platte River.

On the second line of interception, General Crook had concentrated every available man of his department! Here the

Cheyennes were certainly to be stopped, but, knowing well and highly valuing Dull Knife's generalship and resolution, the veteran Crook took no chances, and ordered General Bradley, at Fort Robinson, one hundred and twenty-five miles north of the Union Pacific Railway, to hold his command in readiness for an emergency order, and directed General Wesley P. Merritt, of the Fifth Cavalry, to move his command down the flanks of the Big Horn Mountains to the vicinity of Fort McKinney, Wyoming, one hundred miles to the north-west of Robinson!

A correspondent on the ground at the time wrote to the *Herald*:

"These Cheyennes are considered the finest horsemen in America; they ride their animals as if glued to them, and load and fire with the precision of foot soldiers. Besides this *they have the bravery which comes from desperation and continued ill-treatment.* It is more than suspected things were rotten at their agency, and they preferred to fight rather than starve."

A band of two hundred Northern Cheyennes under Little Chief was brought into Sidney, September 16th, by the Seventh Cavalry. They were being escorted, virtually as prisoners, from their homes in the North to the Cheyenne Reservation at Fort Reno. September 22nd General Crook held a council with them. Little Chief said:

"We are sorry to hear of the outbreak of our people. Many of our relatives must be killed. We do not propose to join them, but we hear we are going to a poor country where the Indian dies. We are leaving our own hunting grounds in the Black Hills where we were born, where our fathers are buried, and we are sad."

From this speech it would seem that Little Chief's character

justified his name; he had none of Dull Knife's greatness of soul and iron courage.

September 28th Dull Knife fought his fifth engagement with the troops since leaving Reno—five fights in a fortnight! The battle occurred in the Cañon of Famished Woman's Fork, near Fort Wallace.

Lieutenant-Colonel W. H. Lewis, Nineteenth Infantry, commanded the troops.

The battle lasted two hours.

The fighting was desperate.

When leading a line of skirmishers within one hundred and fifty yards of the enemy, Colonel Lewis's horse was shot under him. Disengaging himself from his fallen mount, he seized a carbine and advanced with his line. Fifty yards farther on a ball cut the femoral artery in his left leg, and he quickly bled to death.

Lewis was an experienced Indian fighter of a noble record in the desperate plains service of those days, and greatly mourned by all who knew him.

At nightfall the Indians withdrew, leaving one dead warrior and seventeen dead ponies on the field. Besides the loss of Colonel Lewis, three troopers were wounded.

Still the indomitable band held their northward course, fighting for freedom and fatherland.

October 2nd two separate engagements were fought by detached bands of the Cheyennes. In one engagement Lieutenant Broderick, of the Twenty-third Infantry, was wounded, and Corporal Stewart, of Company I, and five soldiers were killed; in the other, a hand-to-hand fight between Indians and ranchmen, eighteen ranchmen were killed and five wounded. The bodies of the dead were brought into Buffalo station. As usual, the Indians carried off their dead and wounded, and their losses were unknown. Most of the dead ranch-

men were settlers on the Beaver, Sappa, and Frenchman Creeks.

Scouts from Thornburg's command on October 3rd sighted a band of Cheyennes on the Frenchman, and estimated their number at two hundred and fifty, sixty armed bucks.

In the three days previous the Cheyennes had stolen two hundred and fifty horses and left sixty dead or worn out behind them on the trail.

At high noon of October 4th the splendid old general, Dull Knife, having assembled his scattered columns into one body, boldly forded the South Platte River, and led his main command north across the Union Pacific Railway, a half mile east of the town of Ogallala, Neb. As quickly as the Indians were sighted, the news was wired to Sidney, and by 4 p.m. Thornburg had arrived with his command at Ogallala, and immediately struck out on Dull Knife's trail. Shortly thereafter he was followed by the command of Captain Mauck, who had been pursuing the Indians constantly since Lewis's death in Famished Woman's Cañon.

Astounded and dismayed by Dull Knife's marching and desperate fighting, General Crook began to feel uncertain whenever and wherever the old chief could be brought to a final stand.

This same day, therefore, he ordered Major Carlton's five troops of the Third Cavalry to leave Fort Robinson, scout the Niobrara Sand Hills, and try to intercept and hold the Cheyennes until Thornburg's column could overtake and strike their rear, and also ordered into the field ten troops of the Seventh Cavalry, then in cantonment at Bear Butte (now Fort Mead), Dakota, on the north-east edge of the Black Hills, *nearly two hundred miles to the north of Carlton, to form the fourth line of military barrier against Dull Knife's advance.*

Two days later (October 6th), despatches came in from

Thornburg reporting his column sixty miles north of Ogallala in the midst of terrible sand hills, wherein, after leaving the North Platte, they had travelled thirty miles without water. No Indians had been seen, and the trails indicated that they were scattered in all directions, singly and in pairs, scattered like a flock of quail, for concealment and rest.

Thus further immediate pursuit became hopeless. The Nebraska Sand Hills were then and are still a great, trackless waste, in extent ninety miles north and south by two hundred miles east and west, bounded on the south by the Platte River, and on the north by the Niobrara—a veritable Sahara of loose, drifting sands in which horse or man sinks ankle-deep at every step; an arid, desert region affording no water except in a few isolated lakes; a region impossible to know because the landmark of one day is removed by the winds of the next; a weird, mysterious, awful country, in which, looking south, one sees naught but an endless sea of yellow, rolling sand waves, while turning and looking to the north the eye takes in a limitless expanse of waving red-top grass, higher than one's stirrups. How pursue hostiles in such a country? It was clearly impossible.

In this dilemma Major Carlton, of the Third Cavalry, who had reached Dog Lake, south of Niobrara, was directed to march his column back north and patrol the divide between the Niobrara and White River, in an attempt to prevent a junction of the Cheyennes with Red Cloud's Ogallala Sioux, then on their agency on White Clay Creek.

Little Wolf's Escape and Dull Knife's Capture

Late in September I had ridden into Cheyenne from the ranch to buy and bring out the winter supplies for my outfit, and there first learned of the Cheyenne outbreak. Naturally

more or less anxiety was felt by men having ranches north of the Platte, but with the great number of troops in the field, news was expected from day to day that the Cheyennes had been rounded up and captured. When, however, on the afternoon of October 5th, news arrived that Dull Knife's main war party had crossed the Union Pacific at Ogallala, it became plain that temporising must cease and the time for action had come; so, leaving instructions that no supplies should be forwarded until after peace was restored and the safety of the trails assured, I struck out northward on the morning of the 5th, alone.

My mount for the journey, fortunately, was the best cow pony I had ever owned or ever saw; a square-built, short-backed, deep-barrelled, dark red bay, with great, blazing-eyes, alert and watchful as any of his long line of wild mustang ancestors; a horse whose favourite gait was a low, swift, daisy-clipping lope, easy as a rocking-chair to the rider, and no more tiring to the beast than a trot to an average pony good old "ND"!

Early in the afternoon ND and I made the Dater Ranch on Bear Creek, fifty miles north from Cheyenne, the last cattle ranch between Cheyennes and my place.

Next morning, starting at dawn, before sunrise, having no trails, and striking straight across country through Goshen's Hole, we swam the Platte, and by noon had reached the ranch of Nick Janisse, lying on the north bank of the Platte, twenty-eight miles east of Fort Laramie.

Janisse was an old French *voyageur* squaw man, who had lived and traded thirty years among the Sioux, and who had then been for some years settled in this isolated valley, within a stout-walled sod stockade.

I had expected to spend the night with Janisse, but shortly after my arrival his son-in-law, a half-breed named Louis

Changro, rode in from the east with the news that he had seen a party of eighteen Cheyenne bucks about fifteen miles east of the ranch, heading north-west directly into the hill country between Sheep Creek and the head of Snake Creek, which I had to cross to get home—this evidently a small scouting party sent out ahead by Dull Knife.

Of course it was madness to expect to cross in daylight the seventy-six intervening miles between Janisse's ranch and mine, with Cheyenne scouts out, although it was probable that they were prowling ahead more in the hope of rounding up fresh ranch horses than anything else.

I therefore decided the ride home must be made that night.

Although the task was a heavy one for a horse that had already done his forty-five miles in the forenoon, I felt old ND could make it.

Just at twilight a tremendous thunderstorm broke, very conveniently, for the moon was not due to rise until after ten o'clock.

As soon as it was dark we struck out on an old United States Government wagon trail long disused, which I would never have been able to follow but for the constant flashes of lightning. Luckily the storm held until time for the moon to rise, and by that time we were getting up out of the valley of Sheep Creek upon the drier uplands, where I could let out ND into the free, easy stride he loved.

We had only one alarm throughout the night. Toward midnight, relying more on ND's alert watchfulness than my own, tired and dozing comfortably in the saddle (a knack all cowboys know and practise when travelling a trail), suddenly old ND made a bound to one side that nearly unseated me.

Of course I could fancy nothing but Cheyennes, but, jerking my pistol and looking quickly round about in the dim moonlight, could see nothing.

Still old ND shied away as if in deadly fear of something behind him on the ground, and, looking closely back, I was surprised to see a skunk following us, literally charging after us as if mad—and mad I have no doubt he was, as often have I heard of men being bitten, while sleeping on the plains at night, by these little animals, and later dying with all symptoms of hydrophobia. Hesitating to take the chance of stirring up some marauding neighbour by shooting my little pursuer, I gave ND his head and we soon left him behind.

Few greater performances by horseflesh than old ND achieved that night are recorded, for when, a little after dawn the next morning, we reached the Deadman home ranch, old ND had completed one hundred and twenty-one miles between sun and sun, and had done it without quirt or spur.

With the garrison only five miles away and a military wire to the railroad, I found the boys already had news of the approaching enemy, and learned that Johnson's and Thompson's troops of the Third Cavalry were patrolling the heart of my range from Robinson to the head of White River, and were scouting daily for the approaching Cheyennes.

Two days after my arrival, October 8th, two of my cowboys reported to the garrison having seen Indians on Crow Butte, two miles east of our ranch, signalling to the south-east with looking-glasses, and dense clouds of smoke were seen to the north in the direction of Hat Creek, the smoke signalling probably the work of the little scouting party Changro had seen crossing the Platte on the 5th.

Late in the night of the 13th, a little band of hostiles raided Clay Deer's store at the old Red Cloud Agency, a mile east of Fort Robinson, and successfully got away with all of his horses, escaping safely south to Crow Butte; and the Sioux scouts told us all that saved our horses on Deadman was the Indians'

superstitious dread of venturing into the valley of Wi-nogi-waka-pala at night.

The next day patrols of troopers reported to Robinson that the main band of hostiles was encamped on the summit of Crow Butte, the most natural point of defence for a desperate final stand in all the country for one hundred miles round about—a high, isolated butte, in ancient times an outer buttress of the tall range of hills rising above the White River Valley to the south, worn by erosion until it stood a detached peak, precipitous on all sides and accessible even to footmen only at one point.

Four troops of cavalry were promptly sent to surround Crow Butte, arriving near nightfall at its lower slopes.

The position was one impossible of direct assault, and therefore pickets were set at short intervals surrounding the butte. Then the commanding officer laid himself comfortably down to rest, with the happy certainty it had fallen to his lot to be the lucky one to succeed in entrapping Dull Knife and his redoubtable band.

But the Indian hosts were by no means yet ready to become hostages, and thus it fell out that when morning came it was found the band had flown—had slipped quietly through the picket lines at night and were far away to the north.

Later it was learned that this band was led by the junior war chief, Little Wolf, and comprised something over two hundred of the younger and stronger members of the band who were still able to travel and to fight.

Before scattering in the sand hills a council had been held, for the situation of the Cheyennes had become utterly desperate. Here they were beyond the settlements, with no more ranches to raid for horses, food, or ammunition. All were worn and exhausted by the march, until it was apparent that the elders of the band would be powerless

to fight their way through to Canada, unless through some diversion. It was, therefore, decided that Little Wolf should lead the stronger on a last desperate dash for the liberty they hoped to find somewhere in the north, while the elders should rest themselves in the hope the main pursuit might be led off by Little Wolf, leaving the elders able to slip through later unobserved.

Successfully eluding the Bear Butte column and still another barrier of troops situated along the Yellowstone, Little Wolf led his band safely through, without the loss of another man, to a junction with Sitting Bull, across the Canadian border.

This march is not excelled in the annals of warfare. It covered a distance of more than one thousand miles in less than fifty days, with a column encumbered with women and children, every step of the trail contested by all the troops of the United States Army that could be concentrated to oppose them; a march that struck and parted like ropes of sand the five great military barriers interposed across their path: the first across the Kansas-Pacific Railway, commanded by General Pope; the second along the Union Pacific Railroad in Nebraska, commanded by General Crook; the third along the Niobrara, commanded by General Bradley; the fourth the Bear Butte (Seventh Cavalry) column, stretched east from the Black Hills; the fifth along the Yellowstone, commanded by General Gibbon.

In the early evening of the 14th, we of the Deadman Ranch were anything but easy in our minds or certain how long we might continue to wear our hair.

Early in the afternoon Tobacco Jake, one of my cowboys had brought the news that the main band of the Cheyennes lay on Crow Butte, two miles to the east of us.

Immediately we circled and rounded up all our horses and put them under guard within our strongest stockaded corral.

The Indians were so desperate for fresh mounts we felt certain of an attack—certain that even their dread of the haunting spirits with which their savage superstition had peopled the valley of Wi-nogi-waka-pala would not prevent them from making a fight to take our fat ponies.

It was therefore a relief when one of the guards entered my room about 10 p.m. and reported a body of men coming up the valley, who, in the moonlight, appeared to him to be marching in such regular order he felt sure they were soldiers.

This proved to be true, and presently arrived before the ranch a sergeant and ten men of Troop B, with two Sioux scouts, Woman's Dress and Red Shirt, the sergeant bringing me a note from dear old Jack Johnson, saying that, while he felt we were quite able to take care of ourselves, it seemed to him expedient to give us reinforcements to help defend our horses, the lifting of which by the Cheyennes would add enormously to the difficulty of subduing the band.

From this most welcome increase to our little force, I doubled the guards around ranch and corrals, and we retired in perfect ease of mind, for the ranch was so placed as to command an open plain on all sides for three or four hundred yards without cover for an attacking party, and so we were warned against a hostile approach ; we felt entirely secure behind our loopholed log walls.

This night and the next day passed without incident, and we later learned that Little Wolf had been so closely invested by troops he could not venture upon a foray.

The next week was indeed an anxious one, for it was known that approximately a third of the Cheyennes still remained grouped or scattered in the sand hills a few miles to the southeast of us.

White River was lined with patrols of troopers, from the head down to Chadron Creek, watching for Dull Knife's

advance. He could not go south, for Thornburg lay behind him; he could not go east or west, for lack of water—he must come north.

During this week Dull Knife succeeded in getting runners through with messages to Red Cloud, of whom, in Dull Knife's name, they besought aid.

They pleaded the blood ties which existed between many of their families. They pleaded the ancient alliance of the two tribes in many a bloody fray with their common enemies, the Crows, the Pawnees, and the whites. But wise old Red Cloud was even a greater statesman than warrior, and had realised long years before the utter hopelessness of resisting the whites. Indeed, had his counsels prevailed against those of Sitting Bull, the campaign of '76 had never happened. Thus, Dull Knife's messengers returned with nothing better than words of sympathy and advice to Dull Knife to surrender and submit himself to the Great Father's will.

After waiting a week without any sign of movement on the part of the hostiles, Colonel Carlton sent out from Fort Robinson, on October 21st, troops commanded by Capt. Jack Johnson, and consisting of Johnson's Troop B and Lieut. J. C. Thompson's Troop D, Third Cavalry, accompanied by twenty-two Sioux scouts under Chiefs American Horse (Red Cloud's son-in-law and now head chief of the Ogallala Sioux) and Rocking Bear. Their orders were to scout the sand hills for the Cheyennes and harry or capture them.

Two days later, when well into the sand hills and near the sink of Snake Creek, Johnson located a band of sixty hostiles, including the Chiefs Dull Knife, Old Crow, and Wild Hog.

In rags, nearly out of ammunition, famished and worn, with scarcely a horse left that could raise a trot, no longer able to fight or fly, suffering from cold, and disheartened by Red Cloud's refusal to receive and shelter them, the splendid

old war chief and his men were forced to bow to the inevitable and surrender.

Later in the day Johnson succeeded in rounding up the last of Dull Knife's scattered command and headed north for White River with his prisoners, one hundred and forty-nine Cheyennes and one hundred and thirty-one captured ponies.

The evening of the 24th Johnson camped at Louis Jenks's ranch on Chadron Creek, near the present town of Chadron, Neb.

A heavy snow-storm had set in early in the afternoon, and the night was so bitter and the Indians so weakened by their campaign that Johnson felt safe to leave them free to take the best shelter they could find in the brush along the deep valley of Chadron Creek.

This leniency he was not long in regretting.

Dull Knife and his band had been feeding liberally for two days on troopers' rations, and had so far recovered strength of body and heart that when morning came on the 25th, the sentries were greeted with a feeble volley from rifle-pits in the brush, dug by Dull Knife in the frozen ground during the night!

And here in these pits indomitable old Dull Knife fought stubbornly for two days more—fought and held the troops at bay until Lieutenant Chase brought up a field-gun from Fort Robinson and shelled them to a final surrender!

Thus ended the first episode of Dull Knife's magnificent fight for liberty and fatherland, and yet had he had food, ammunition, and mounts, the chances are a hundred to one that his heroic purpose would have been accomplished, and the entire band that left Reno, barring those killed along the trail, would have escaped in safety to freedom in the then wilds of the North-west Territory.

And that, even in this apparently final surrender to hopeless

odds, Dull Knife was still not without hope of further resistance, was proved by the fact that when he came out of his trenches only a few comparatively old and worthless arms were surrendered, while it later became known that twenty-two good rifles had been taken apart and were swung, concealed beneath the clothing of the squaws!

After taking a day's rest, Johnson marched his command into Fort Robinson, arriving in the evening in a heavy snowstorm, where the Cheyennes were imprisoned in one of the barracks and their meagre equipment dumped in with them, without further search for arms or ammunition. Later it was learned that that night the Indians quietly loosened some of the flooring of the barrack and hid their arms and ammunition beneath it, so that when a more careful search of their belongings and persons was made two days later, they were found to be absolutely without weapons of any description.

The Outbreak at Fort Robinson

Fort Robinson was a good type of the smaller frontier posts of the '70s. It stood on a narrow bench to the north of and slightly elevated above the valley of Soldier Creek.

Facing the parade-ground, on the north were eight sets of officers' quarters; on the east, a long company barrack; at the southeast angle, another barrack; beyond this, to the west, the guard-house, then the adjutant's office, then the quartermaster's and the commissary warehouses; back and to the south of these, the company stables and corrals; on the west, the hospital; at the northwest angle, Major Paddock's sutler's store.

A half mile down the valley of White River stood the old ruined cantonment of Camp Canby.

Dull Knife and his people were confined in the log barrack at the southeast angle of the parade-ground. No doors were

locked or windows barred. A small guard patrolled the barrack-prison night and day.

What to do with these indomitable people puzzled the Indian Bureau and the army.

The States of Kansas and Nebraska were clamouring for their temporary custody for the purpose of the identification, prosecution, and punishment of individual members for killings committed during their march north in October.

The Sioux, with whom they were closely federated and allied, wanted them released and settled in the Sioux Reservation; and Sioux wishes could not be idly disregarded, for the best military authorities then agreed it would need discreet handling to prevent the Sioux from taking the war-path again so soon as green grass rose in the spring.

The question of any particular justice in the claim of the Cheyennes that the agreements of the Government (made upon their surrender in 1876) had not been kept, and that their return to the Indian Territory meant speedy death from fevers, received no serious consideration.

In his reports to the General of the Army for 1878, Gen. P. H. Sheridan made the following noble plea:

"There has been an insufficiency of food at the agencies, and as the game is gone, hunger has made the Indians in some cases desperate, and almost any race of men will fight rather than starve. . . . The question of justice and right to the Indian is past and cannot be recalled. We have occupied his country, taken away his lordly domain, destroyed his herds of game, penned him up on reservations, and reduced him to poverty. For humanity's sake let us give him enough to eat and integrity in the agent over him."

In December a great council was held in the barrack-prison.

The Sioux chiefs, Red Cloud, American Horse, Red Dog, and No Flesh, came over from their agency to attend it. The Government was represented by Captains Wessells and Vroom and their juniors. The Cheyennes were gathered in a close circle, the officers and visiting chiefs near its centre, the bucks back of them, and farther back still the squaws and children.

Red Cloud was the principal Sioux speaker. He said in substance:

"Our hearts are sore for you.

"Many of our own blood are among your dead. This has made our hearts bad.

"But what can we do? The Great Father is all-powerful. His people fill the whole earth. We must do what he says. We have begged him to allow you to come to live among us. We hope he may let you come. What we have we will share with you. But remember, what he directs, that you must do.

"We cannot help you. The snows are thick on the hills. Our ponies are thin. The game is scarce. You cannot resist, nor can we. So listen to your old friend and do without complaint what the Great Father tells you."

The old Cheyenne war chief, Dull Knife, then stepped slowly to the centre of the circle, a grim, lean figure.

Erect, despite his sixty-odd years, with a face of a classical Roman profile, with the steady, penetrating glance and noble, commanding bearing of a great leader of men, Dull Knife stood in his worn canvas moccasins and ragged, threadbare blanket, the very personification of the greatness of heart and soul that cannot be subdued by poverty and defeat.

Never when riding at the head of hundreds of his wild

warriors, clad in the purple of his race—leggings of golden yellow buckskin, heavily beaded, blanket of dark blue broadcloth, war bonnet of eagles' feathers that trailed behind him on the ground, necklace of bears' claws, the spoils of many a deadly tussle—never in his life did Dull Knife look more a chieftain than there in his captivity and rags.

He first addressed the Sioux :

"We know you for our friends, whose words we may believe. We thank you for asking us to share your lands. We hope the Great Father will let us come to you. All we ask is to be allowed to live, and to live in peace. I seek no war with any one. An old man, my fighting days are done. We bowed to the will of the Great Father and went far into the south where he told us to go. There we found a Cheyenne cannot live. Sickness came among us that made mourning in every lodge. Then the treaty promises were broken, and our rations were short. Those not worn by disease were wasted by hunger. To stay there meant that all of us would die. Our petitions to the Great Father were unheeded. We thought it better to die fighting to regain our old homes than to perish of sickness. Then our march was begun. The rest you know."

Then, turning to Captain Wessells and his officers :

"Tell the Great Father Dull Knife and his people ask only to end their days here in the north where they were born. Tell him we want no more war. We cannot live in the south ; there is no game. Here, when rations are short, we can hunt. Tell him if he lets us stop here Dull Knife's people will hurt no one. Tell him if he tries to send us back we will butcher each other with our own knives. I have spoken."

Captain Wessell's reply was brief—an assurance that Dull Knife's words should go to the Great Father.

The Cheyennes sat silent throughout the council, all save one, a powerful young buck named Buffalo Hump—old Dull Knife's son. With the thin strip of old canvas that served as his only covering drawn tightly about his tall figure, his bronze face aflame with sentiments of wrong, of anger, and of hatred, Buffalo Hump strode rapidly from one end to the other of the long barrack room, casting fierce glances at the white men, the very incarnation of savage wrath. From beginning to end of the council I momentarily expected to see him leap on some member of the party, and try to rend him with his hands.

Of course nothing came of the council. The War and Interior Departments agreed that it would be imprudent to permit these unsubduable people to be merged into the already restless ranks of the Sioux. It was therefore decided to march them back south to Fort Reno, whence they had come.

Fearing disturbance and perhaps outbreak among the Sioux when this order became known, Capt. P. D. Vroom, with four troops of the Third Cavalry, was ordered to reinforce the two companies of the garrison commanded by Captain Wessells.

Captain Vroom's column reached Robinson early in January, 1879, and went into quarters at Camp Canby, one mile east of the post, and Vroom reported to Wessells, the ranking captain, for orders.

January opened with very bitter weather. Six or eight inches of snow covered the ground. The mercury daily made long excursions below zero. Even the troops in cantonment at Canby were suffering severely from the cold—some with frozen feet and hands. It was all but impossible weather for marching.

Nevertheless, on January 5th, Captain Wessells received orders from the War Department to immediately start Dull Knife's band, as quietly and peaceably as possible, and under proper escort, on the march to Fort Reno, six hundred miles away in the south! This was the decision of the Indian Bureau, and the Secretary of War was requested to have the decision immediately enforced. Hence the order which reached Captain Wessells.

Captain Wessells sent a guard to the barrack and had Dull Knife, Old Crow, and Wild Hog brought into his presence at headquarters. On the arrival of the Indians a council was held. Captain Wessells advised them of the order of the Department that they were to return to the Indian Territory.

Dull Knife rose to reply. His whole figure trembled with rage; his bronze cheeks assumed a deeper red; the fires of suppressed passion blazed through his eyes until they glittered with the ferocity of an enraged beast at bay. Nevertheless, he spoke slowly and almost calmly. He did not have much to say. He made no threats or gestures.

He said he had listened to what the Great Father had ordered. It was the dearest wish of him and his people to try to do what the Great Father desired, for they knew they were helpless in his hands. But now the Great Father was telling them to do what they could not do—to try to march to the Indian Territory in such weather. Many would be sure to perish on the way, and those who reached the reservation would soon fall victims to the fevers that had already brought mourning into nearly all their lodges. If, then, the Great Father wished them to die—very well, only they would die where they then were, if necessary by their own hands. They would not return to the south, and they would not leave their barrack-prison.

Captain Wessells knew that Dull Knife's complaint was

well founded. Still, bound by the rigid rules of the service, he had absolutely no latitude whatever. He therefore directed the interpreter to explain to Dull Knife that the orders were imperative and must be obeyed, and to assure him that the cavalry escort would do all in their power to save the Indians from any unnecessary hardship on the journey.

Dull Knife, however, remained firm, and his companions, when appealed to, only growled a brief assent to Dull Knife's views.

"Then, Interpreter," said Wessells, "tell them their food and fuel will be stopped entirely until they conclude to come peaceably out of their barrack, ready to march south as ordered."

The three chiefs silently heard their sentence, and were then quickly marched back to their barrack-prison by a file of soldiers.

All this occurred shortly after "guard mount" in the morning.

Apart from its inhumanity, Wessells's order was bad policy. Hunger drives the most cowardly to violence. Then, to add to the wretched plight of the Indians, they were all but naked. No clothing had been issued to them since their capture, and they were clad only in tattered blankets and fragments of tent cloth. Requisitions for clothing had been sent to the Indian Bureau, but none had come.

Thus, half naked, without food or fires, these miserable people starved and shivered for five days and nights, but with no thought of surrender!

Captain Wessells sent the interpreter to propose that the children be removed and fed, but this they refused; they said they preferred to die together.

For five days and nights the barrack rang with shrill, terrible death chants. It was clear that they had resolved

to die, and weakening fast indeed they were under the rigours of cold and hunger, weakening in all but spirit.

The morning of the 9th of January, the fifth day of their compulsory fast, Captain Wessells again summoned Dull Knife, Old Crow, and Wild Hog to a council.

Only the two latter came.

Suspecting violence, the Indians refused to let their old chief leave the barrack.

Asked if they were ready to surrender, Wild Hog replied that they would die first.

The two chiefs were then ordered seized and ironed. In the struggle Wild Hog succeeded in seriously stabbing Private Ferguson of Troop A, and sounded his war-cry as an alarm to his people.

Instantly pandemonium broke loose in the Indian barrack.

They realised the end was at hand.

The war songs of the warriors rang loudly above the shrill death chants of the squaws.

Windows and doors were quickly barricaded.

The floor of the barrack was torn up and rifle-pits were dug beneath it.

Stoves and flooring were broken into convenient shapes for use as war clubs.

The twenty-odd rifles and pistols which had been smuggled into the barrack, by slinging them about the waists of the squaws beneath their blankets, at the time of the capture, were soon brought from their hiding-place and loaded.

They expected an immediate attack, but none came.

And all day long the garrison was kept under arms, ready for any sortie by the Indians.

Night at last came, and, notwithstanding the terrible warnings of the day, no extraordinary precautions were taken. A guard of only seventeen men were under arms, and of these

only a few were on post about this barrack full of maddened savages.

All but Captain Wessels were so certain of a desperate outbreak that night that Lieutenant Baxter and several other officers sat fully dressed and armed in their quarters, awaiting the first alarm.

" Taps " sounded at nine o'clock, the barracks were soon darkened, and the troopers retired.

Only a few lights burned in the officers' quarters and at the trader's store.

The night was still and fearfully cold, the earth hid by the snow.

Ten o'clock came, and just as the " all's well " was passing from one sentry to another, a buck fired through a window and killed a sentry, jumped through the window and got the sentry's carbine and belt, and sprang back into the barrack. Then two or three bucks ran out of the west door, where they quickly shot down Corporal Pulver and Private Hulz, both of Troop A, and Private Tommeny, of Troop E.

At doors and windows the barrack now emptied its horde of desperate captives, maddened by injustice and wild from hunger. Nevertheless, they acted with method and generalship, and with a heroism worthy of the noblest men of any race.

The bucks armed with firearms were the first to leave the barrack. These formed in line in front of the barrack and opened fire on the guard-house and upon the troopers as they came pouring out of neighbouring barracks. Thus they held the garrison in check until the women and children and the old and infirm were in full flight.

Taken completely by surprise, the troops, nevertheless, did fearfully effective work. Captain Wessells soon had them out, and not a few entered into the fight and pursuit clad in nothing but their underclothing, hatless and shoeless.

The fugitives took the road to the saw-mill crossing of White River, only a few hundred yards distant from their barrack, crossed the White River, and started southwest toward my ranch, where they evidently expected to mount themselves out of my herd of cow ponies, for they carried with them all their lariats, saddles, and bridles to this point. Here, pressed hopelessly close by the troops, their gallant rear-guard of bucks melting fast before the volleys of the pursuers, the Indians dropped their horse equipments, turned and recrossed White River, and headed for the high, precipitous divide between Soldier Creek and White River, two miles nearer their then position than the cliffs about my ranch. They knew their only chance lay in quickly reaching hills inaccessible to cavalry.

All history affords no record of a more heroic, forlorn hope than this Cheyenne sortie.

Had the bucks gone alone, many would surely have escaped, but they resolved to die together and to protect their women and children to the last.

Thus more than half their fighting men fell in the first half mile of this flying fight. And as the warriors fell, their arms were seized by squaws and boys, who wielded them as best they could!

In the gloom of night the soldiers could not distinguish a squaw from a buck. Lieutenant Cummings fell into a wash-out near the saw-mill nearly atop of two Indians. They attacked him with knives, but he succeeded in killing both with his pistol—only to find that they were squaws!

The struggle was often hand-to-hand, and many of the dead were powder-burned. For a long distance the trail was strewn thick with bodies.

A sergeant and several men were pursuing two isolated fugitives, who proved to be a buck and squaw. Suddenly

the two fugitives turned and charged their pursuers, the buck armed with a pistol, the squaw with a piece of an iron stove! They were shot down.

This running fight afoot continued for nearly a mile, when the troops, many of them already badly frozen, were hurried back to the garrison to get needed clothing and their mounts.

Soldier Creek Ambuscades

That night at ten o'clock I sat in my room at the Deadman Ranch, five miles south of Fort Robinson, writing a letter descriptive of the day's incidents, and of the peril threatening us, to my then partner, Clarence King.

I had ridden into the garrison that morning for my mail, and was passing the headquarters building at the very moment the fight occurred, in which Dull Knife and Old Crow were seized and bound—in fact, dismounted and got into the building in time to see the finish of the fight.

I had remained in the garrison until mid-afternoon, a witness of the desperate temper of the captives.

Indeed, I do not think there was an officer in the garrison, outside of the commanding officer, who did not feel perfectly certain in his mind that the Cheyennes would in a few hours at the most make a finish fight for liberty, for from the hour of the seizing of the two chiefs, all day long death-chants and war-songs were ringing in the barracks.

In the event of such an outbreak, our position at the ranch was serious, for mine was the only large band of horses then in the immediate neighbourhood, and any who might succeed in cutting their way through the troops and temporarily eluding pursuit were certain to seek mounts from my *cavallada*. I, therefore, returned to the ranch in time to have the horses rounded up and thrown in stockade, about which a guard was set at dark.

At precisely 10 p.m. one of my cowboy guards sprang into my room and cried :

" Th' ball's opened down thar at th' Fort, 'n' she's a h——l of a big one ! "

Hurrying outside into the clear, still, bitterly cold night, I could plainly hear heavy rifle fire at the post that proved a desperate engagement was on.

The north end room of the ranch house itself was a stable, in which on emergency nights like this each of us had his best horse ready saddled.

Leaving eight men to guard the ranch and corrals, I immediately mounted and took with me a boy named Matthews, on a run for the fort, with the purpose to learn if there was any likelihood of any of the Cheyennes escaping in our direction.

A brilliantly clear night, and with nearly a full moon, we could see a considerable distance ahead of us over the snow, so that there was comparatively small risk of running into the hostiles unawares.

Half-way into the garrison we could hear heavy firing on our left, which told us the chase led west up the White River Valley.

Then suddenly all firing ceased.

Spurring rapidly ahead at full speed, we soon reached a high, conical hill about two hundred yards south of the sawmill, a hill which commanded a full view of the garrison, and we rode to its summit.

There beneath us, across the valley, lay Fort Robinson in the moonlight, calm and still.

In the entire garrison only one lamp was alight, and that at Major Paddock's trader's store.

No one could fancy that Death had been at work there in one of his most terrible forms.

" Ol' Man," said Matt, " I reckon we better pull our freight

for the ranch. From all that shootin', 'pears to me like there caint be many left alive, and that d——d still valley don't look to me no good country to go into."

However, I decided to ride on into the garrison, and we descended the hill toward the river.

Presently, nearing the narrow fringe of timber that lined the stream, we could see ahead of us a broad, dark line dividing the snow: it was the trail of pursued and pursuers—the line of flight. Come to it, we halted.

There at our feet, grim and stark and terrible in the moonlight, lay the dead and wounded, so thick for a long way that one could leap from one body to another; there they lay grim and stark, soldiers and Indians, the latter lean and gaunt as wolves from starvation, awful with their wounds, infinitely pathetic on this bitter night in their ragged, half-clothed nakedness.

We started to ride across the trail, when in a fallen buck I happened to notice I recognised Buffalo Hump, Dull Knife's son.

He lay on his back, with arms extended and face upturned. In his right hand he held a small knife, a knife worn by years and years of use from the useful proportions of a butcher knife until the blade was no more than one quarter of an inch wide at the hilt, a knife descended to domestic use by the squaws as an awl in sewing moccasins, and yet the only weapon this magnificent warrior could command in this his last fight for freedom!

As I sat on my horse looking down at Buffalo Hump, believing him dead, the picture rose in my mind of the council in which he had stalked from end to end of the barrack, burning with an anger and hatred which threatened even then and there to break out into violence, when suddenly he rose to a sitting position and aimed a fierce blow at my leg

with his knife. Instinctively, as he rose, I spurred my horse out of his reach and jerked my pistol, but before I could use it he fell back and lay still—dead.

So died Buffalo Hump, a warrior capable, with half a chance, of making martial history worthy even of his doughty old father.

I dismounted, took the little knife from his hand, cut its tiny leather sheath from his belt, and had just remounted, when we got the sharp challenge, " Who goes there ? " from the dense plum thicket to the west of the trail, to which we were not slow in answering, " Friends," when out of the brush marched Lieut. George Baxter at the head of his half-dressed, dismounted troopers, hastening back to the garrison for their horses.

" Where are your Indians, George ? " I called.

" Every mother's son gone but those laid out along the trail, old man," he answered.

Then Matt and I rode on into the post, meeting Lieut. Jim Simpson and Dr. Pettys, out with a wagon and detail of men, gathering up the dead and wounded.

Immediately on hearing the fire, Vroom, at Camp Canby, had thrown two troops in skirmish order across the valley to prevent escape to the east, and hurried into Robinson himself at the head of a third troop.

Already mounted, Vroom was the first to overtake and re-engage the flying Cheyennes, whose knowledge of the geography of the country proved remarkable. They had selected a high bluff two miles west of the post as their means of escape, its summit inaccessible to horsemen for more than six miles from the point of their ascent.

Almost daily for months had I ridden beneath this bluff, and would readily have sworn not even a mountain goat could ascend to its summit; but, hidden away in an angle

of the cliff lay a slope accessible to footmen, and this the Indians knew and sought.

Just below this slope Vroom brought the rear guard to bay, and a brief, desperate engagement was fought. The Indians succeeded in holding the troops in check until all but those fallen under the fire of Vroom's command were able to reach the summit.

Here on this slope, fighting in the front ranks of the rear guard, the "Princess," Dull Knife's youngest daughter, was killed!

Further pursuit until daylight being impossible, the troopers were marched back into the garrison.

By daylight the hospital was filled with wounded Indians, and thirty-odd dead—bucks, squaws, and children—lay in a row by the roadside near the saw-mill, and there later they were buried in a common trench.

At dawn of the 10th, Captain Wessells led out four troops of cavalry, and, after a couple of hours' scouting, found that the Indians had followed for ten miles the summit of the high divide between White River and Soldier Creek, travelling straight away westward, and then had descended to the narrow valley of Soldier Creek, up which the trail lay, plain to follow through the snow as a beaten road.

Along this trail Captain Vroom led the column at the head of his troop. Next behind him rode Lieut. George A. Dodd, then a youngster not long out of West Point, and later for many years recognised as the crack cavalry captain of the army. Next behind Dodd I rode.

Ahead of the column a hundred yards rode Woman's Dress, a Sioux scout.

For seventeen miles from the post the trail showed that the fugitives had made no halt! A marvellous march on such a bitter night for a lot of men, women, and children,

many of them wounded, all half clad and practically starved for five days!

Presently the trail wound round the foot of a high, steep hill, the crest of which was covered with fallen timber, a hill so steep the column was broken into single file to pass it. Here the trail could be seen winding on through the snow over another hill a half mile ahead.

Thus an ambush was the last thing expected, but, after passing the crest of the second hill, the Indians had made a wide detour to the north, gained the fallen timber on the crest of this first hill, and had there intrenched themselves.

So it happened that at the moment the head of Vroom's column came immediately beneath their intrenchment, the Cheyennes opened fire at short range, emptied two or three saddles, and naturally and rightly enough stampeded the leading troop into the brush ahead of and back of the hill, for it was no place to stand and make a fight.

And here a funny thing happened. Dodd was a youngster then, fuller of fight than experience, and at the first fire, realising the hopelessness of work in the saddle on such ground, he sprang off his horse, and had no more than hit the ground before his horse jerked loose from him, and, looking about, he found himself alone on the hillside, the only target, and a conspicuous one, for the Cheyennes' fire.

Nothing remained but to make a run for the brush, and a good run he made of it, but, encumbered with a buffalo overcoat and labouring through the heavy snow, he soon got winded and dropped a moment for rest behind the futile shelter of a sage bush.

Meantime, the troopers had reached the timber, dismounted, taken positions behind trees, and were pouring into the Indian stronghold a fire so heavy that Dodd was soon able to make another run and escape to the timber unscathed.

Arrived there, Vroom noticed Dodd rubbing the back of his neck and asked him what was the matter, when Dodd answered :

" Mighty heavy timber I was lying under out there, wasn't it ? You know, the limbs cut off by the Indians' fire and falling on the back of my neck felt like strokes from a base-ball bat ! "

A humorous sarcasm on the scanty shelter of a sage bush and the slender sage twigs Tommy was picking out of the back of his collar !

The Indian stronghold on the hilltop was soon surrounded and held under a desultory long-range fire all day, as the position was one impregnable to a charge.

No packs or rations having been brought, at nightfall Captain Wessells built decoy camp fires about the Indians' position and marched the command back into the garrison.

The Battle on War Bonnet Bluffs

Early in the afternoon of the 10th, shortly after the troops had surrounded the hill held by the hostiles, I rode alone back into the garrison and started for my Deadman Ranch.

About a mile south of the saw-mill I met a trooper riding at high speed for the garrison, and turned and rode with him.

He told me Lieutenant Baxter, with a detachment of ten men, had located, on the slope of a bluff a mile east of the Deadman Ranch, a camp of Indians which he believed represented a large band of the hostiles still loose.

Pointing to a spur of the bluffs three or four hundred feet high standing well out into the valley a scant mile east of my ranch, the trooper hurried on into the garrison for reinforcements, and I spurred away for the bluff, and soon could see a line of dismounted troopers strung along the crest of the ridge.

As I rode up to the foot of the bluff, skirmish firing began on top of the ridge.

After running my horse as far up the hill as its precipitous nature would permit, I started afoot climbing for the crest, but, finding it inaccessible at that point, started around the face of the bluff to the east to find a practicable line of ascent, when suddenly I was startled to hear the ominous, shrill buzz of rifle balls just above my head, from the skirmish line on the crest of the ridge—startled, indeed, for I had supposed the Indians to be on the crest of the bluff, farther to the south.

Dropping behind a tree and looking down-hill, I saw a faint curl of smoke rising from a little washout one hundred yards below me, and, crouched beside the smouldering fire in the washout, a lone Indian.

This warrior's fight and death was characteristic of the magnificent spirit which had inspired the band, from the beginning of the campaign at Fort Reno.

In mid-afternoon, scouting to the south of the garrison for trails, Lieutenant Baxter had discovered this camp fire, and, quite naturally assuming that none but a considerable band of the Indians would venture upon building a camp fire so near to the garrison, had immediately sent a trooper courier into the garrison with advice of his discovery.

Then he dismounted his command and approached the camp fire in open skirmish order, until it was plain to be seen that the fire was deserted. The trail of a single Indian led into the washout, and imprints in the snow showed where he had sat, evidently for some hours, beside the fire. But of the washout's fugitive tenant no trace could be found, no trail showing his route of departure. In one direction, along a sharp ridge leading toward the hogback's crest, the snow was blown away, the ground bare, and this seemed to be his natural line of flight from Baxter's detachment.

After what all believed a thorough search of the vicinity of the fire, Leutenant Baxter left Corporal Everett and a trooper near the fire, and, remounting, led the balance of his men up the slope with the view to cut the Cheyenne's trail wheresoever it might again enter the snow.

Baxter was gone barely ten minutes when he was startled by two rifle-shots in his rear, from the vicinity of the fire! Looking back, he saw his two troopers prostrate in the snow, and later learned that Everett and his mate, while stamping about to keep warm, had approached a little shallow washout within thirty yards of the fire that all vowed they had looked into, and suddenly had discovered the Indian lying at its bottom, wrapped in a length of dirty old canvas the precise colour of the gray clay soil—which doubtless had served to conceal him through the earlier search. The moment the Indian made sure he was discovered, he cast open his canvas wrap and fired twice with a carbine, shooting Corporal Everett through the stomach and killing him almost instantly, and seriously wounding his mate.

Thus rudely taught that humanity was useless, and that it must be a fight to the death, observing "Papa" Lawson approaching from the fort at the head of his troop, Baxter swung his own men up and along the top of the ridge, where they could better command the old Cheyenne's position, and opened on him a heavy fire—and it was just at this juncture I arrived.

Immediately after I first sighted the Indian, "Papa" Lawson swung around the foot of the hill with his troop, dismounted, and charged up on foot—thus making sixty men concentrated upon one!

The old Cheyenne kept up his rapid fire as long as he could. Toward the last I plainly saw him fire his carbine three times with his left hand, resting the barrel along the edge of

the washout, while his right hand hung helpless beside him.

Suddenly I saw him drop down in the bottom of the washout, limp as an empty sack.

When we came up to him it appeared that while the shot that killed him had entered the top of his head, he nevertheless earlier in the engagement had been hit four times—once through the right shoulder, once through the left cheek, once in the right side, and a fourth ball toward the last had completely shattered his right wrist.

It was apparent that he had been making a desperate break to reach my horses, which usually ran in the very next cañon to the west, for he still carried with him a lariat and bridle; but his unprotected feet had been so badly frozen during the night that he had become entirely unable to travel farther, and, realising himself to be utterly helpless, in sheer desperation had built a fire to get what poor, miserable comfort he could for the few minutes or hours remaining to him!

A curious incident here followed.

An ambulance had come with Lawson's troop to the field, in which the body of Everett and his wounded mate were placed, while the body of the dead Cheyenne was thrown into the boot at the back of the conveyance. Upon arrival in the garrison, Lieutenant Baxter discovered that the body of the Indian had been lost out of the boot on the short four-mile journey into Robinson, and sent back a sergeant and detail of men to recover it. But the most careful search along the trail failed to reveal any trace of the body, and whatever became of it to this day remains a mystery.

On the night of the 10th fifty-two Indians had been recaptured, approximately half of them more or less badly wounded, and thirty-seven were known to have been killed, leaving a total of sixty unaccounted for.

Still without food, on the morning of the 11th, the seventh day of their fast, and unable to march farther, Captain Wessells's column found the fugitives occupying a strong position in the thick timber along Soldier Creek at the foot of the hill upon which they had been intrenched the day before, better sheltered from the severity of the weather.

Again long-range firing was the order of the day, for a charge would have incurred needless hazard.

During this day the Indians succeeded in killing a troop horse on an exposed hillside within three or four hundred yards of their position. The rider narrowly escaped with his life.

The ground where the horse fell was so openly exposed the carcass had to be left where it had fallen, and that night, after Captain Wessells had again marched his command back into the garrison, the carcass furnished the first food these poor wretches had eaten for seven days!

That their hearts were firm as ever and that all they needed was a little physical strength the next few days effectually proved.

The 12th they lay eating and resting, and when on the 13th Wessell's column returned to the attack, the Indians were found six miles farther to the west, well intrenched on the Hat Creek Bluffs, and there again an ambush was encountered in which two troopers were wounded.

On this day a twelve-pound Napoleon gun was brought into action, and forty rounds of shell were thrown into the Indians' position, without dislodging them.

This same day Captain Wessells and Lieutenants Crawford and Hardie crept near the rifle-pits with an interpreter and called to the Cheyennes to bring out their women and children, promising them shelter and protection. A feeble volley was the only reply!

Realising the Indians had now reached a cattle country in which they could kill meat and subsist themselves, Captain Wessells had brought out a pack-train, with blankets and rations, to enable him to surround the Indians' position at night, and, should they slip away, to camp on their trail.

This night they were surrounded, but at dawn of the 14th Lieutenant Crawford discovered the wily enemy had again slipped through the picket lines, headed south-westward along the high bluffs which lined the southern edge of Hat Creek Basin.

For six days more the same tactics on both sides prevailed; the Indians were daily followed in running fight, or brought to bay in strong positions practically impregnable of direct attack, surrounded at nightfall, only to glide away like veritable shadows during the night, and of course more or less were killed in these daily engagements.

On the 20th Captain Wessells's command was joined by Lieutenant Dodd and a large band of Sioux scouts.

Tuesday, the 21st, saw the finish.

At a point on the Hat Creek Bluffs, near the head of War Bonnet Creek, forty-four miles a little to the south of west of Fort Robinson, the Cheyennes lay at bay in their last intrenchment, worn out with travel and fighting, and with scarcely any ammunition left.

They were in a washout about fifty feet long, twelve feet wide, and five feet deep, near the edge of the bluffs.

Skirmishers were thrown out beneath them on the slope of the bluff to prevent their escape in that direction, and then Captain Wessells advanced on the washout, with his men formed in open skirmish order.

A summons through the interpreter to surrender was answered by a few scattering shots from the washout.

Converging on the washout in this charge, the troopers soon

were advancing in such a dense body that nothing saved them from terrible slaughter but the exhaustion of the Cheyennes' ammunition.

Charging to the edge of the pit, the troopers emptied their carbines into it, sprang back to reload, and then came on again while above the crash of the rifles rose the hoarse chants of the expiring band.

The last three warriors alive—and God knows they deserve the name of warriors if ever men deserved it—sprang out of their defences, one armed with an empty pistol and two with knives, and madly charged the troops!

Three men charged three hundred!

They fell, shot to pieces like men fallen under platoon fire.

And then the fight was over.

The little washout was a shambles, whence the troops removed twenty-two dead and nine living, and of the living all but two (women) were badly wounded!

These were all that remained out of the sixty unaccounted for after the fighting near Fort Robinson, excepting five or six bucks, among them Chief Dull Knife, who had been cut off from the main band in the first night's fight and had escaped to the Sioux.

And among the Ogallala Sioux thereafter, till he died, dwelt Dull Knife, grim and silent as Sphinx or dump man; brooding his wrongs; cursing the fate that had denied him the privilege to die fighting with his people; sitting alone daily for hours on the crest of a Wounded Knee bluff rising near his tepee, and gazing longingly across the wide reaches of the Bad Lands to a faint blue line, on the north-western horizon, that marked his old highland home in the Black Hills; mentally fighting over again and yet again the tussles of his youth and the battles of his prime, until, to his excited

vision, the valley beneath him was again filled with charging war parties—grimly painted men naked to their moccasins and breech-cloths on ponies naked to their bridles—chanting their war songs, the eagle feathers of dearly won war bonnets flying behind them, bow strings twanging, lance clashing on bull-hide shield; and then, with quivers empty and lances broken, the last deadly tussle hand-to-hand, with its silent knife thrusts, the dull thud of the deadly, flexible-handled, stone-headed war club, the clutch of eager fingers on scalp locks, and the tearing of these terrible trophies of victory from still throbbing heads!

CHAPTER EIGHT

MCGILLICUDDY'S SWORD

ODDS against your effective fighting force of fourteen hundred to one are, to say the least, impressive. To be sure we had one hundred allies, but at the outset they were naturally—as will appear later—an unknown quantity.

That I was present at Red Cloud's White Clay Agency at such a time was not because I was hunting trouble, but was simply due to the fact that trouble seemed to take a lot of pleasure in hunting the few plains dwellers of that day in that region—it just came to all of us, in one form or another, in the course of the day's work in the late '70's and early '80's.

And it came naturally and rightly enough. We were trespassers, the first trespassers, upon the best-beloved camping and hunting grounds of the Sioux. To be sure that region had been "ceded" to the Government. But the "cession" had been negotiated virtually by force of arms,

and the Sioux resented it, resented it the more for that, of the lands left to them as their reservation in perpetuity, at least eighty per cent. are in the Dakota Bad Lands, whose expressive name ill conveys their inability to support anything more nearly animate than the rich store of fossils of prehistoric life that must forever remain the only tenants of their bald buttes and naked swales.

There were only a few of us then to the north of the North Platte River, all cattle ranchmen, and no nearer settlement than Cheyenne, our supply town, two hundred miles to the south-west.

For three years we had no county organisation. Every man was a law unto himself. In the extreme north-west corner of Nebraska we were nominally attached for all legal and taxable purposes to the next organised county on the east, Holt, whose county seat, O'Neil, lay nearly three hundred miles away. But, in merry frontier practice, Indians and road agents were so industrious that for the first three years of our occupation no tax assessor or other county or state official ever appeared as a reminder that, technically, we dwelt within the pale of the law.

Such a state of society naturally appealed to and attracted predatory reds and whites.

Thus the one thing perhaps a trifle more insecure than human life was property.

Dunc. Blackburn, Jack Wadkins, Lame Johnny, and like knights of the highway lurked along the stage roads, preyed upon stage-coaches and tenderfoot travellers to and from the Black Hills, but never monkeyed with bull whackers or ranchmen; outlaw cowboys like Jack Handly, Jack Stroud, and Tom Kyle stole cattle and drove them to the mining camps or lifted horses and ran them into the south-eastern settlements; Indians—well, whenever times were otherwise

dull we could always depend upon the Indians for an ambush of our range riders or a raid upon our horse herds.

Thus there was always enough doing to keep one's gun from getting rusty or himself from over-sleeping.

And the difficulties in dealing with such conditions will be better appreciated when it is explained that the average ranch outfit seldom numbered more than eight to twelve men, and the reader is reminded that ranches were rarely nearer, one to another, than twenty miles!

The remoteness of course and the lack of regularly constituted sheriffs or other peace officers in Northern Wyoming, Dakota, and North-west Nebraska forced the ranchmen to organise, for mutual protection, the Wyoming Stock Growers' Association, and before it ceased work the Association did much toward pacifying the country; indeed, in so far as outlaw cowboy rustlers was concerned, the country was made quiet and peaceful as a New England village graveyard.

The methods of the Association were simple but direct. A small but very select corps of highly expert man hunters was employed, and a member of the Executive Committee was assigned the charge and command of such of the corps as were assigned to him by the Committee.

To the average outlaw of the day it was such a matter of professional pride to "die with his boots on" rather than be made captive, that encounters of hunters and hunted nearly always meant a finish fight.

At the time I was the member of the Executive Committee of the Association in charge of the "inspectors" assigned to my district.

Quite the most serious condition on our district needing attention was the raiding of our horse herds by the Sioux. Nominally the Sioux and the whites had been at peace since the battle of the Little Big Horn; but the young bucks were

hard to control, and every full of the moon plunder-bent bands of these youngsters slipped quietly away from the Agency at night in quest of the wealth most highly prized by Sioux warriors—horseflesh—the wealth with which brides were bought and battles fought and won. For girls sought in marriage were valued in terms of horses—the greater their attractions the more horses demanded—and it was the frequent fresh remounts from their abundant horse herds that made it next to impossible for cavalry (limited to a single mount per man) to bring hostile Indians to bay, except in such positions and circumstances of advantage as the hostiles themselves chose.

The troops in the country were willing enough, but powerless to help us. The identity of the marauders was as hopelessly lost in the mass of the tribe as that of the horses in the mass of the Sioux herds.

So early that spring I went to the White Clay Agency and had a conference with Dr. McGillicuddy, the United States Government agent for Red Cloud's Lakotah (Ogallala) Sioux.

Dr. McGillicuddy was a man in a million for his post. And yet he only did his duty, plain and simple; saw that his Indians got the last pound of provisions and supplies and the last yard of goods the Indian Bureau allowed and sent them; dealt with them for the grown-up children they in many ways were; humoured their whims, but boldly opposed and checked their excesses; strove his best to see that they had justice; sought to cut their war trails into short paths of productive peace beginning and ending in tilled fields.

Could the Indian Bureau have commanded the services of a few score such agents through the last half of the last century, half our Indian wars had never happened, for at least that percentage had their direct cause in the want and hunger bred of incapable or corrupt handling of Indian supplies.

Before becoming agent, McGullicuddy had been an army surgeon. He was then in his prime, in the early thirties, broad of shoulder, lean of flank and jaw, with a steady-gazing, searching eye of the sort an enemy finds no cheer in. And, happily alike for him and his charges, he owned a wife, present with him at his post, as big of body, stout of courage, honest of purpose, and kind of heart as was he himself—ideal mates they were for their task.

Naturally, the more McGillicuddy could check the Sioux warlike practices, the easier his task became. Indeed, I found him as keen to assist in stopping their predatory raids on ranch horse herds as were we of the Association. He told me he had already planned the organisation of a small band of Indian police, which shortly he intended to effect, notwithstanding the proposal had been met by bitter opposition from all the active leaders of the tribe, and with this force to patrol the reservation for returning bands of horse stealers. Thus he hoped to come upon them before they had time to burn out brands and otherwise disfigure and disguise the stolen horses past identification.

This plan was a long step to the good; and when I suggested placing permanently at the Agency one of our inspectors expert in brand reading and he promptly assented, all that we could hope or expect of the agent was accomplished.

A few days later one of my best men, Charlie Conley, took station at the Agency, but it was several weeks before the agent succeeded in organising his police force.

Ultimately, McGillicuddy chose a young warrior, named Sword, and told him if he would organise a band of one hundred youngsters no more than twenty years old to serve as police, he would uniform, arm, and equip them, and would make Sword chief of the band. "But mind," explained the agent to Sword, "if any of your own nearest relations do

wrong, and I send you out to arrest them, in you must bring them, dead or alive!" All this was nuts for Sword, for it not only gave an important command to a man then only a warrior, but also gave him, as executor of the agent's orders, general authority over even the elders and chiefs of the tribe.

And little did the tribe like it, old or young, for it was not long until the police, aided materially by Inspector Conley, made important recoveries of stolen stock, and interfered seriously with their predatory pleasures and profits.

But just as I began to feel that I could see a safe solution of the Indian end of our problem, trouble loomed up from an unexpected quarter.

Both Dr. McGillicuddy and Inspector Conley were men of a hair-trigger temper, the former wedded to and the latter divorced from everything that stood for punctilious formalities. So it was not long until they fell foul of each other.

Presently, one day early in June, the same man brought me two brief letters—one from the doctor stating that if I did not recall my inspector immediately, he would have him run off the reservation by the Indian police; the other from Conley saying that unless I gave him authority to leave the Agency pretty quick, he reckoned he'd have to kill the agent.

Neither gave any explanation—from which I inferred the difficulty was purely personal and temperamental, of a sort possible of patching.

So that evening I forked a bronco and hit the trail for the Agency, sixty miles away, where I arrived early the next morning.

And I found myself come none too soon; the agent was about ready to order the inspector's expulsion by the police, and the inspector was quite ready to kill the agent if he attempted anything of the sort, and then take his chances of

shooting his way through the police to escape—in the carrying out of which uncomplicated strategy the odds would have been ten thousand to one against Conley, for the entire tribe would have welcomed a chance to pot him. However, about a little matter of odds men of Conley's breed never worried, where the stakes were no more than one's own life.

And this highly tense, really deadly, situation had its origin in what?

In the fact that Conley had developed the friendly habit of coming unbidden to the doctor's office, rolling and smoking cigarettes unasked, and roosting his feet comfortably on the doctor's desk, preferably on a corner of his writing pad!

The differences were not hard to adjust. Secretly each respected the other, knew the other was doing good work and a man all through. Conley was sorry he had "mussed the doctor's humany frills," the doctor that he had resented Conley's notion of sociability. So by the second day I had them at handshakes, and the best of friends.

That evening three army officers arrived—Major John G. Bourke, of the Third Cavalry, and Lieutenants Waite and Goldman, of the Fifth Cavalry. Major Bourke was well chosen for the task that brought him, viz., a study of the Sun Dance, due to begin the next morning, for his previous studies and writings on Moqui Snake Dancing, Zuni Fire Worship, and Apache Medicine Men remain the most valuable contributions to the literature of these subjects.

On a bench above and to the east of the narrow valley of White Clay Creek stood the Agency. Within a low wall, topped by a picket fence and nearest the creek, stood Dr. McGillicuddy's office, a hundred feet east his residence, beyond that the great *Wakan-pomani* building, the "Mysterious Give Away House," the ware- or storehouse that held the supplies sent by the Government for distribution by the

agent, probably first called *Wakan* (mysterious) by the Sioux because to them it must have been matter of mystery however such vast store of riches could be assembled at one time and place. Across the road from the *Wakan-pomani* stood the store of the licensed Indian trader, Mr. Blanchard.

In mid-forenoon of the next day all of us were assembled in Dr. McGillicuddy's office, by his invitation, to take ambulance for the dance—Major Bourke, Lieutenants Waite and Goldman, Mr. Blanchard, Charlie Conley, and myself. Mr. Lord, the doctor's clerk, and Louis Changro, his half-breed interpreter, were also in the office.

Sword, Chief of Police, had been about with several of his men, but at the moment was outside. His men (and usually he himself) were uniformed neatly in blue jackets and trousers and soft black hats.

But this morning Sword was a sartorial wonder. Above beautifully beaded moccasins of golden yellow buckskin rose the graceful lines of well-fitting dark blue broadcloth trousers, circled at the waist by a beaded belt carrying two six-shooters and a knife, topped by a white shirt, standing collar, and black bow tie, and by a perfectly made vest and " cutaway " coat matching the trousers (the vest decorated with a metal watch-chain yellow as the moccasins), crested by a well-brushed silk top hat—while from beneath the top hat defiantly swung Sword's scalp-lock, a standing challenge to whomsoever dared try to take it !

And yet, despite this opera bouffe rig, Sword, with the bronze of handsome features lit by the flash of piercing black eyes, supple of movement, soft of tread, dignified in bearing, Sword stood a serious and even a heroic figure—the man who dared court the most bitter tribal opposition and enmity by undertaking the enforcement of white men's law as administered by Agent McGillicuddy.

While we were quietly chatting, the rest of us pumping Bourke and the doctor for what they had of Sun Dance lore, suddenly we were interrupted by the startlingly quick entry of Sword, who slipped in softly and swiftly as a shadow and began a low-spoken, hurried statement to Changro.

Presently Changro turned and interrupted:

"Sword he say heap Injun come down White Clay—ride war ponies—all Brulés. Sword he no like looks."

And, after a glance out of the door, I am sure none of us liked the looks of things—of the things most actively animate in our immediate landscape—any more than Sword did.

A band of between three and four hundred bucks sat their war ponies about three hundred yards from the gate. A thick cloud of dust behind and south of them showed they had approached at top speed, and had just stopped, evidently for a conference.

Presently ten advanced slowly toward the office gate, while the rest of the band withdrew the way they had come, ultimately stopping about eight hundred yards away.

By Dr. McGillicuddy's advice, all of us resumed our seats.

Acting almost in unison, curiously, evidently moved at the same moment by the same thought, several of us proceeded to take on a bit of extra insurance by slipping spare cartridges into the "hammer chamber" of our pistol cylinders, usually carried empty for purposes of better safety against accidental discharge. I am sure I should have been glad to have a pistol into which I could have emptied the entire contents of my full belt, for the odds against us looked rather long.

The Brulés, two thousand of whom had come over from Rosebud to attend the Sun Dance, were well known for an ugly, desperate lot. Indeed, they had been spoiled by an agent who lacked most of the good qualities McGillicuddy possessed. Honest enough in his administration, he was

afraid of his charges, and they knew it and took advantage therefrom when and how they pleased—even to the point of subjecting him to downright insult. At Rosebud Agency, not the agent but Spotted Tail exercised authority.

Indeed, it was common report that more than once Spot forced the agent to read to him letters written the Indian Bureau about Agency affairs, and snatched and tore up several he did not like and threw them in the agent's face.

And it was a band of these bronze beauties now approaching —with some demand sure to be arrogant and utterly unreasonable.

Presently they entered the office, the ten of them, each with the outline of a rifle showing beneath his blanket, grunted a gruff " How ! " and squatted on the floor facing the agent, with their backs against the north wall of the room, nearest the door—a scowling, sinister lot, plainly come on no honest errand.

After sitting in absolute silence fully ten minutes the Brulé chief, whose name I have forgotten—a tall, powerful buck of forty-five, with narrow-set, evil, ferret eyes—turned to Changro, the interpreter, and growled :

" You tell agent we want grub ! "

" You tell him, Louis," replied McGillicuddy, " I am advised by his agent that he and his people come fully rationed for the round trip."

" You tell agent he **must** give us grub—*now*, NOW ! " fiercely demanded the chief.

Looking the chief straight in the eye, a half-smile on his face, McGillicuddy quietly answered :

" Louis, just tell him to go to hell—he gets no grub at this Agency."

Instantly the chief bounded to his feet, swiftly crossed to the doctor's chair, and, angrily shaking his fist in the doctor's face, hoarsely shouted :

"If you don't give us grub—*now!*—I'll kill every white man on this reservation."

For an age, it seemed, the chief stood and McGillicuddy sat confronting each other, a wicked scowl on the chief's face, a smile on McGillicuddy's.

Presently I saw Mac's jaws tighten, and then, without a word, he sprang upon the chief, seized him by the throat, and shook him till his rifle fell to the floor, then rushed him to the door, whirled him around till a full if not a fair target was presented, and then landed duly upon the target as hard a kick as any I ever saw delivered on a try for "goal," sending the chief sprawling nearly ten feet from the door, hurt of person and spirit by the indignity and half-smothered from the choking—a little the maddest, most hideously snarling thing I ever saw.

Immediately his nine henchmen ran out and helped him to his feet.

Instinctively we all lined up outside the door, backs to the wall, and among us, to our surprise, came by magic about a dozen of Sword's youngster policemen, each fingering first the trigger and then the hammer of his rifle like a guitar player strumming for the key to a tune.

"Reckon the ball's plumb open now, an' it's 'swing partners,'" drawled Charlie Conley—the only remark made by any one I can now recall.

For a few minutes it was touch and go for us. A single shot and it would have been all over in a very few minutes. Escape was quite as impossible as help. Indeed, the one troop of cavalry at Fort Sheridan, eighteen miles away, and the two troops at Fort Robinson, sixty miles distant, if present, would not have lasted an hour—the ball once opened.

It was therefore a great, if only a temporary, relief when presently the chief and his men sullenly withdrew through the gate and retired toward his band.

"Mama! but won't hell pop good and plenty in about half an hour when that old coffee-cooler gits back with his bunch to finish the ball! But we'll sure make 'em think we can dance *some* befo' the music stops," expressed Conley's wholly experienced view of the situation.

"Major Bourke," said the doctor, "you are the senior officer present—will you assume command?"

"No, doctor," answered Bourke; "you are in supreme authority here, I on duty detached from my arm of the service; and"—with a grim smile of approval—"you seem to me to be doing quite well enough. Command me as your aide."

Without a word, Sword and his men had disappeared toward their camp below the bluff, a hundred yards distant, as soon as the Brulés left. And Sword's withdrawal was no small source of anxiety; for, notwithstanding their apparently excellent conduct through the crisis just past, nevertheless this was the first really serious test of the loyalty of his police.

However, we were not long left in doubt. Indeed, our doubt was most gratefully relieved—after we got over the violent attack of heart disease super-induced by the manner of their return.

The Brulé chief and his band we had been watching like hawks. Apparently none had been detached, and they were still in conference several hundred yards away.

Mrs. McGillicuddy and Mrs. Blanchard had been brought to the office—for whatever poor protection we could give them.

Suddenly, out of the hidden valley beneath and west of us rose a thunder of hoofs that seemed to herald some newcomers to the ball we certainly had not invited.

Down we all dropped behind the fence wall, rifles cocked and levelled, and we were barely down when up over the

bluff, not thirty yards distant, charging us at mad speed, came a sure-enough war party. Keen eyes sought sights and fingers were already pressing triggers when Changro shouted!"

"No shoot! Sword he come!"

It was indeed our trusty Sword, with every man-jack of his youngsters!

Reining in at the gate, Sword quietly led his men behind—to the north of—the office, left the ponies in charge of a few horse holders, and then lined his men along the wall beside us—honest Sword! ready to come to death grips with his own flesh and blood in defence of his white chief!

Dr. McGillicuddy may have known a prouder and happier moment than this, but I doubt it.

But what a transformed Sword now stood among us! How changed he and his men!

The years had rolled back; yea, indeed, the centuries!

In ten minutes we had lost a regularly uniformed police force, led by a chief habited like a veritable civilised dandy, and had gained in its stead a band of barbarian allies, absolutely naked to their moccasins and scanty breech-cloths, their faces black-painted and half hidden beneath great war bonnets of streaming eagle feathers, as were those of their savage ancestors whenever they went to war or when their "hearts were bad" and they sought to kill in private quarrel; so habited and painted, their forbears sought their enemies way back in the dim past when their race dominated much of the Atlantic coast, when even the mound builders were still young.

Naked, also, to the bridle were their war ponies.

But however habited, whatever their motives of allegiance—whether of attachment and fidelity to their white chief or, what was far more likely, of pride of office and conceit

of authority — welcome to us, indeed, these brave lads were.

And they got to us none too soon; for, before they were well settled behind the wall (that made us an excellent breastwork), here came the Brulés, hell-a-ta-tilt, quirts pounding on straining shoulders, moccasined heels drumming on heaving flanks, the fierce riders lying low over the withers and getting every last jump out of their piebald cayuse mounts.

Here they came—nearly four hundred of them—charging straight on our position before the office, an irregular but solid mass of straining horses and yelling riders, apparently bent upon riding us down—a living, breathing, sentient yet remorseless tide, weighty enough to raze wall and office to the ground at the first impact, and leave naught behind but splintered boards and bones.

Here they came and there we sat, ours far the hardest part of it; theirs the excitement and hope of conquest born of a charge in overwhelming numbers, ours the dull, chill wait for the end bred of a sense of hopeless odds against us; theirs the hot, savage lust for blood, ours the despair of men condemned past hope of reprieve.

Hope? Such sentiment for us no more existed. Even were we able to withstand the Brulés for a time, it still remained a certainty the prevailing hostility to the police would bring the whole Ogallala tribe in upon us so soon as powder burned and blood ran.

The doctor's orders were simple:

"Fire under no circumstances till ordered!" No more.

On they came, and yet on!

Time and again I caught a bead on the chief's breast with my ·45–120 Sharps that easily might have sent him into permanent camp on Ghost Creek, and it is a miracle I—or none of the others—pulled trigger.

At length, when their steady onrush must have become trying even to McGillicuddy's iron nerves, they reined in and stopped a scant sixty yards in front of us—why, God only knows, unless the steady nerve of his control of us got on their nerves. But stop, happily, they did—a grim, heaving, threatening mass, darkly outlined against the wall of gray dust behind them, feathered war bonnets dancing, ponies prancing, shields rattling, weapons gleaming.

And there they stayed, for Heaven only knows how long, until it would have been a relief to see the charge renewed.

With the best of us there's a breaking point. Presently McGillicuddy's was reached.

"Jump out there, Louis," he called to the interpreter, "and tell that old devil to chase himself back to camp. I'll give him five minutes before we fire, no more. Tell him, if ever he bats his eyes at me again I'll just choke him to death for luck"—a cropping out of the old Anglo-Saxon confidence in good bare hands against an armed brute!

Out sprang Changro with the message, and up jumped the doctor on the wall, watch in hand, prepared to time the making of his message good.

Half-way Changro stopped and shouted his message, and then returned to us. It was a plucky deed of him, for none of us expected to shake his hand again.

Then ensued a brief, heated parley among the Brulés. Judging by his angry gesticulations, the chief, bursting with resentment, wanted to charge. The rest of the band—most of them, at least—seemed to be opposing it: apparently, seven or eight minutes' contemplation of the mouths of our one hundred rifles left the Brulés little stomach to wait to hear them speak.

Hold them the old chief could not, and they turned and rode off south, up White Clay, toward Sun Dance Flat.

And then I awakened to a curious fact I wish some clever physiologist would explain, an experience had before this incident, and since when placed in like circumstances—either under threatened or actual fire: while it was mid-forenoon and not extremely hot, while the affair had lasted little if any more than forty minutes and we had been subjected to no physical exertion, I found I had developed a consuming, burning thirst and parched mouth quite as distressing as that I felt once when in the desert two full days without water. And others have told me they have had like droll experience under similar conditions.

CHAPTER NINE

THE LAST GREAT SUN DANCE

TWELVE THOUSAND WILD SIOUX SUN WORSHIPPERS SACRIFICE TO THEIR DEITY—SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DANCE

THE Sun Dance was a great public ceremonial rite held so sacred and so dear by Sioux Sun Worshippers that we know little more of its real significance than of the Druid rites at Stonehenge that awed and swayed the early Britons, less than we know of Aztec Fire Worship. It was a rite held but once a year—always in the full of a spring moon, usually in June, when the green grass was well up and the ponies fat and strong and ready for whatever desperate foray the excitement of the dance might inspire.

The last great Sun Dance, that assembled all of the Ogallalas or Lakotah Sioux, and a third of the Brulés, and I believe the last actual dance ever held, occurred at Red Cloud's Agency on White Clay Creek in Southern Dakota, either in the spring of 1880 or 1881, I cannot be certain which.

I had ridden over to the Agency on a day's business, and just as I was about to saddle and start for home, the agent, Dr. McGillicuddy, told me the Sun Dance was about to begin, and that it would probably be the last great Sun Dance the Sioux would ever hold; that, in addition to his ten thousand Ogallalas, ten thousand of Spotted Tail's Brulés from the Rosebud Agency had arrived to attend the dance, and that three army officers (Major John Bourke and Lieutenants Waite and Goldman) were due that evening, specially detailed to study and report upon its mysteries and significance, and invited me to remain and see the ceremony, which I was only too glad—then—to do.

While worshippers of many different objects, undoubtedly the worship of the sun as a divinity was the very keystone of the Sioux's religion. Whether the sun was held to be *Wakantanka*, or The Great Spirit, in person, or whether the sun was worshipped as most highly emblematic of *Wakantanka*, I never could learn. Certain it is that it was to the sun alone the Sioux warrior appealed, by devout sacrifice, fasting or feast, in his most dire dilemmas and when about to engage in his most desperate enterprises.

And since plainly the sun is all-powerful to give or to deny, the maker of heat and light, the giver of the generous warmth and the shedder of the copious tears that makes the grass to grow that fattens alike the buffalo and the ponies, and that, later, serves to ripen the wild plum and the sarvis berry, the maize, the gooseberry, and the turnip, why indeed should not Sioux sufferers supplicate his charity and largess, and Sioux adventurers into perils beseech his aid?

Of the inner significance of the various ceremonies incident to the dance we know little.

Certain, however, it is that no cultsman, civilised or pagan, ever bent before the throne of his spiritual allegiance with

more of profound faith and reverence, or took more pains to purify the body by cleansing and to exalt the spirit by fasting before supplicating and sacrificing to his deity, than did the Sioux Sun Dancer.

Any could participate in the Sun Dance proper, but few did. Motives for participation in the last extreme rites were various.

Parents having a child mortally ill often made a vow to *Wakantanka* that if the child's life were spared they would dance the next Sun Dance.

A like vow was made by a warrior having a deadly enemy—as recompense for aid in safely putting the enemy where he could do no more harm.

Sioux in deadly peril of flood or famine so vowed—as pledge for help to escape their peril.

Young bucks yet untried in war so vowed and danced—to prove their courage.

For a year the Indian Bureau had been struggling to destroy the tribal relation of these people, to clip the authority of the chiefs, to induce them to till the soil and build houses, and thus to wean them from their nomadic habits and teach them the value of peace and industry.

And that, in some ways, they were not so slow to "catch on" was proved effectively when Gen. James R. O'Bierne came out as the Special Agent of the Indian Bureau and called a council of the chiefs of the tribe to tell them what the Great Father proposed to do for them. After an eloquent eulogy of peace and the comforts and prosperity it brings, and a grim picture of the distresses entailed by war, he told them that to every head of a family who would abandon his tepee and build a house of one room, the Great Father would present a cooking stove, with a heating stove thrown in for a house of two rooms; that they would be given wagons, ploughs, hoes, scythes, rakes, etc.

Evidently the interpreter had translated "scythe" as "a knife that cuts grass," for immediately O'Bierne finished, up rose an old chief named No Flesh and asked:

"What does the chief say we are to get?" and the interpreter repeated the offer.

"You tell the chief to tell the Great Father," answered No Flesh, "that we don't want *knives* that cut grass—nothing the white man has thrown aside—*we want wagons that cut grass.*"

And mowing-machines No Flesh's people got!

This year the Sioux must dance and sacrifice with no guests present but Spot's band of Brulés. Of the other guests from time immemorial usually bidden to this ceremony, the Omahas and Pawnees were already so nearly shut in by and absorbed into the settlements to the south-east, that only the memory lingered in the minds of the elders of their approaching cavalcades, bright with glitter of arms and brilliant with every colour of the rainbow, outlined against the white walls of the Niobrara bluffs or a thread of many colours winding through the sombre pines that crested their summits; while the Cheyennes left within the United States since Dull Knife's last fight at Fort Robinson were few and scattered, the Nez Percé well-nigh extinct, and the Blackfeet, Crees, Mandans, and Gros Ventres were pressed back, within narrow reservation lines, tight up against the Canadian border, a full moon's journey distant.

The tepees of the tribe were strung out for miles along the valleys of White Clay and Wounded Knee, more thickly clustered into villages at irregular intervals about the lodge of one or another of the sub-chiefs that owned their fealty.

At twilight of this eventide criers were out in every village, with weightier news and orders than any their soft monotones had conveyed since the issuance of Sitting Bull's call to arms

and to assembly on the Little Big Horn—criers who paused at points of vantage through the villages, called for attention and cried the stirring news that, by order of Red Cloud and his elder counsellors, the time for the Sun Dance had come, and that on the following morning the entire tribe would assemble on the great flat two miles south of the Agency, and there pitch their tepees in the vast circle prescribed by Sun Dance traditions.

The scene the next morning was like a savage Derby day. For hours, indeed throughout the live-long day, a broad stream of primitive humanity swept past the Agency buildings, filling the valley from rim to rim, *en route* to Sun Dance Flat—as since it has been known—a stream that ebbed and flowed a bit but never stopped till the entire tribe, with all their wealth of lodges, weapons, implements, and domestic chattels, freighted on *travois* or on the backs of ponies, had reached the designated camping site; a stream gay of temper as in its colours, all keen for the feasts and agog for the excitement of the coming ceremony.

With the valley too narrow to allow of a perfect circle with so many tepees pitched close together in a single row, an ellipse was formed parallel with the general course of the stream, with a length north and south of something over a mile, and a breadth at the centre of nearly three quarters of a mile, with, at the extreme north end, a broad entrance or opening in the otherwise solid ellipse of the tepees.

All this work of removal and arrangement of the lodges was conducted with perfect discipline under the direction of the chiefs or their lieutenants, aided by specially designated armed bailiffs who were quick to punish breaches of discipline or disobedience of orders with no light hand.

A second day was allowed for settling this horde of people,

making place for Spot's Brulés, who had come in the day before, correcting the tepee alignment and restoring order.

On the next day, the third, a small band of not more than ten or twelve of the most noted warriors of the tribe were named by the chiefs to go out into the hills and select the *Wahkan* (Mystery) tree, to be cut and used as the Sun (Centre) Pole of the great Sun Dance Tepee later to be built.

For this emprise the participants decked themselves as for battle, with all the gauds of their savage war equipment, mounted their best war ponies, and then circled the camp, each chanting the personal deeds that had won him the honour to make one of the *Wahkan* tree hunters.

And then they rode out into the hills. Toward evening they returned, and, having found a satisfactory tree, they cut out a broad square of sod near the centre of the camp, exposing the generous brown loam beneath, as the site for the Sun Pole—the centre of the Sun Lodge.

The doings on Sun Dance Flat the first and second days were told us, for none of us visited the Flat until the third day—and then I know at least one of the little party was none too glad he had come.

The " political " situation at the Agency was then under tense strain. As a part of his efforts to stop the Sioux from plundering neighbouring ranch horse herds, and to maintain better order on the reservation, Dr. McGillicuddy had recently organised a police force of a hundred young bucks, and had made a magnificent young warrior named Sword their captain. Red Cloud, and indeed the entire tribe, bitterly objected to the organisation of this force, and had threatened active hostility toward it. Indeed, Sword's police had made themselves specially obnoxious by backing up the doctor in his opposition to unreasonable demands by the visiting Brulés.

So it was very much of a problem whether it would be safe for us to go to the dance.

But when, the morning of the third day, Dr. McGillicuddy and Major Bourke discussed the wisdom of making our contemplated visit to the dance, both agreed a bold front was likely to permanently settle the Brulés's grouch and the Ogallalas' resentment of the doctor's police organisation, more likely than to stay tight at the Agency, and leave them suspicious we were afraid of them. Indeed, any available defences at the Agency were so poor we were as well off at one place as another.

So two ambulances were soon brought and we trotted off up the creek toward the Sun Dance, Sword's police half ahead of and half behind us in a fairly well-formed column of twos.

Come to the Sun Dance Camp, the scene was one never to be forgotten. The camp lay on a broad, level bench of the valley, probably a mile and a half long, a green wall of cottonwoods lining the stream to the west, while south and east rose tall bluffs thickly covered with pines. The tepees were pitched in a single row to form a vast ellipsoid, in its breadth occupying the entire width of the valley and nearly filling it from end to end. The centre of the ellipsoid was entirely open, like the parade-ground of a big garrison.

Here were no divisions of class. The tepees of the rich and of the poor hobnobbed side by side—here a magnificent tall lodge covered with splendid buffalo robes painted with the totem of the family, there a miserable low hut little better than a temporary *wickiup*, ill-covered with fragments of rent and worn canvas.

And in and out among the tepees swarmed the Sioux host, a moving frame of brilliant colours enclosing the bright green of the central plain, the dark blue and bright red of broadcloth

blankets and leggings, and the golden yellow of buckskin prevailing.

When well within the circle, Sword asked the doctor to stop the ambulance a few minutes. He then proceeded to put his police through a mounted company drill of no mean accuracy, good enough to command the commendation of Major Bourke and Lieutenants Waite and Goldman.

The drill finished, and without the least hint to us of his purpose, Sword suddenly broke his cavalry formation and, at the head of his men, started a mad charge, in disordered savage mass, straight at the nearest point of the line of tepees to the west; and, come within twenty yards of the line, reined to the left parallel to the line, and so charged round the entire circle, his men shouting their war-cries and shooting as fast as they could load and fire over the heads of their people, sometimes actually through the tops of the lodges.

It was Sword's challenge to the tribe! One hundred challenging twelve thousand!

And luckily for us all the bluff was not called. The tribe ducked to cover within their tepees like rabbits to their warrens.

Altogether it made about the most uncomfortable ten or fifteen minutes I ever passed, for we had nothing to do but sit idly in our ambulances, awaiting whatever row his mad freak might stir.

At length, the circuit finished, Sword drew up proudly before us and saluted, his horses heaving of flank and dripping of sides, and spoke to Changro.

Then Louis interpreted:

"Sword he say now Sioux be good Injun—no bother police any more! They know they eat us up quick, but then Great Father send heap soldier eat them up!!"

And so it proved, for to the performance of the duties required of the police by the agent, there was never again active opposition.

After a quick turn about the camp we drove back to the Agency. Arrived there, all drew a deep breath, and then drank deep to an impromptu toast, suggested by Inspector Conley the moment his glass was filled :

" Here's to the pretty d——d good luck that we-uns still wears our hair ! "

The fourth morning we were out at the camp bright and early and spent the day there—and a busy day indeed it proved for the tribe and their visitors.

At dawn of this morning a tepee two or three times the size of the largest ordinarily used was set up within the circle, due east of the point chosen for the Sun Pole, and nearer to the line of the tepees than to the pole. This was in effect a great medicine lodge, within which all the candidates for the dance were that morning assembled by the medicine men, and therein kept closely secluded, none being permitted to enter except certain designated attendants.

For the three preceding days all the candidates had been purifying themselves for the ceremony by a very rigorous fast and an almost uninterrupted succession of sweat-baths.

Of nourishment for these days, and indeed through the remaining four days of the dance, the dancers partook of little except the frequent nibbling of white sage leaves, bound like wreaths or great bracelets about their wrists, and occasionally renewed. The floor of the medicine lodge, moreover, was strewn thickly with white sage, and indeed sage seemed to play an important part throughout the dance, for the dancers were frequently rubbing their breasts with handfuls of the herb, why, we could only conjecture—perhaps from an exaggerated value set upon its medicinal virtues.

Their sweat-bath was as effective as it was primitive. It was simply a *wickiup*, a low hut built by sticking the thick ends of brush or slender boughs into the earth about a circle six or eight feet in diameter and interlacing their tops. This hive-shaped frame was thickly covered with buffalo robes till tight as a drum. Large, hot stones, heated in a nearby fire, were rolled into the hut, the bathers, naked, then entered with a vessel of water and sat down about the heated stones, while one of their number began dipping the " bush " of a buffalo tail in the water and sprinkling the stones. Thus the lodge was kept densely filled with steam, and there the bathers sat and took it as long as they could stand it, then ran out and plunged into and refreshed themselves in the nearest stream or pool and resumed the steaming process.

About nine o'clock in the morning practically the entire tribe mounted and assembled outside the circle. None were left in the tepees except the old and infirm and youngsters too small to ride. At a signal from the chief medicine man, and led by the men who had selected the *Wahkan* tree, all started at best speed of their ponies as mad a charge upon the tree (a mile distant) as ever upon an enemy in war—up a steep slope, across a rocky, timbered hogback, and down into and through a ravine, upon the farther slope of which stood the chosen " Mystery Tree."

About the tree the tribe was soon so densely massed that we could see little of ceremonies that occupied more than an hour.

Then the medicine men pressed the throng back and four young warriors, honoured by selection as the fellers of the tree, approached the tree, and each in turn first proudly told the story of his most daring deeds in battle, and then struck the tree one heavy blow with an axe, each striking it on the opposite sides representing the four cardinal points of the

compass, the first blow falling, if my memory rightly serves, on the east side.

This done, a young squaw, held, we were told, to be of unblemished reputation, dressed in a beautiful white tanned (unsmoked) fawn skin tunic, covered with concentric rows of elk teeth (these teeth then a standard currency of the tribe, having a value of a dollar each), sprang forward, grasped the axe, and quickly finished the felling of the tree.

Next the four men who first struck the tree proceeded to trim it neatly of all branches, until it remained a graceful length of springy poplar, perhaps ten inches in diameter at the base. Then the pole was *travoised* back to camp, with greatest care not to man-handle it, for to touch it or even to travel in advance of it seemed either a breach of the ritual or an offence threatening heavy penalty or hazard of some sort.

Upon reaching the summit of a low hillock, near and overlooking the Sun Flat, the mass of the tribe stopped, and a few elders advanced with the Sun Pole and set it firmly in its chosen place.

Then ensued the wildest charge conceivable—all the mounted warriors galloping through the broad north entrance of the circle and rushing at top speed upon the Sun Pole, until, under pressure of converging lines, many horses and riders went down, not a few to serious injury. Finally out of the heaving, struggling, panting, bleeding mass at last a young warrior was borne out in honour, as having been the first to strike the pole.

The chiefs and their aides soon had the rout untangled, and all were ordered to their tepees, save a large band (chiefly squaws), that quickly set about the erection of the Sun Dance Lodge proper.

This lodge as built was circular in form and, I should think, more than two hundred feet in diameter. Two rows of posts

forked at the top, were set about this circle about fifteen or twenty feet apart, the outer posts probably eight feet high, the inner about ten feet. The spaces between the outer circle of posts were then closely filled in by sticking thick pine boughs in the ground, thus making a tight enclosure, with no opening save the main entrance on its eastern side. Shelter was then furnished by stretching robes and tepee cloths above the spaces between the outer and inner posts—and the lodge was done, ready for the next day's ceremonies in the great central circle about the Sun Pole, open to the sky, and about one hundred and fifty feet in diameter.

The next morning, the fifth, we reached the lodge at dawn and found it packed to overflowing, the dancers gathered in the central ring, naked above the waist, but covered by red and blue blankets belted about the loins, all wearing sage "wristlets."

As well as I can remember, there were forty-odd dancers, none past middle life, a few comparative youths, and one squaw. We were told the squaw and her husband were dancing as the fulfilment of a vow to endure its punishment if the life of a sick child were spared.

The space within the lodge beneath the shelter was crowded with the tribe, all tricked out in their bravest finery. Many of the richer of the squaws were dressed in golden yellow or snow white buck or fawn skin tunics, soft as velvet, falling half-way between knees and feet, some of the tunics with broad yoke or stole-shaped decoration of a solid mass of turquoise blue beads, edged with a narrow row of red beads, and some more or less covered with rows of elk teeth—some of these latter representing hundreds of dollars in value, and going to prove that Eve's daughters had an inconvenient knack of making themselves a most extravagant luxury long before the first *modiste* wrought in silks, laces, and velvets. The

brilliant colours and rich bead-work of the men's costumes and the barbaric magnificence of their feathered war bonnets are too well known to take space here.

There was one costume, however, that deserves mention, as does also the wearer, Little Big Man, the proudest of them all, who, while owning a scant five feet in height, had the breadth and depth of chest, and length and power of arms of a giant, and who had the reputation of being one of the most desperate and ruthless warriors of the tribe. Some one had presented him, or perhaps, indeed, he had won in the Custer fight, a captain's blouse, in very good condition, and just as we entered the lodge, Little Big Man, proudly wearing this uniform coat, fell in behind us. Camp stools had been brought for Mrs. McGillicuddy and Mrs. Blanchard, the trader's wife, and when they were seated at the inner edge of the circle and we grouped near them, Little Big Man squatted upon the ground beside them, evidently bent upon winning their admiration. Presently, apparently thinking he was not creating the sensation justly his due, he rose, unbuttoned, and removed his blouse, and so stood beside them, completely naked to the waist, his broad breast and great, sinewy arms showing a dozen or more scars of deadly tussles in which, to be here alive, he must have bested the enemy, each scar emphasised by a dab of red paint streaming like blood beneath it. After himself alternately admiring these scars and looking to the ladies for approval, he gravely resumed his blouse and his seat.

And then a funny thing happened. Scarcely was he seated, when a tall, handsome young squaw stepped in front of him, bent quickly, and scooped up a double handful of sand and threw it in his face. Instantly he pulled a six-shooter and fired to kill her, but, blinded by the sand and his arm knocked up by another Indian, the ball flew high above the heads of all—and then for five minutes the lodge rang with such peals

of derisive laughter that Little Big Man slunk away into the crowd and was not seen by us again at the Sun Dance.

Changro explained the cause of the incident lay in Little Big Man's evil tongue, that in camp gossip the night before he had besmirched this young woman's character, and that she thus took the first opportunity to give him the lie in the good old tribal way.

Just as the sun rose above the horizon, the dance in his honour began.

The dancers were ranged in separate rows, eight or ten dancers to the row. They stood shoulder to shoulder, facing east, a little wooden whistle in the mouth of each.

At the boom of a great medicine tom-tom, each extended his arms forward and upward toward the sun, hands open and palms turned outward, bent slightly at the knee, and began a slow but steady rising on the ball of the foot and dropping back on the heels, which was the only movement of the "dance" proper, his eyes gazing unblinkingly upon the sun, a pipe of each whistle accompanying each "step" of the dance. And so they whistled and gazed and danced for hours, and days indeed, till noon of the third succeeding day, their arms occasionally rested by dropping them to the sides, their eyes by a medicine man standing behind each row holding inclined forward above their heads a long wand, from the top of which a small feather dangled at the end of a long string, and as the feather was blown about by the wind, each dancer closely followed its every shift by movement of head and eyes.

Only at long intervals, and when exhausted well nigh to the point of falling in their tracks, were the ranks broken and the dancers given a brief rest, a mouthful of broth, and fresh sage armlets.

Throughout this dance no word was spoken to or by the

dancers, as far as we could see; they were left to rapt mental concentration upon the subject of whatever vow or prayer had moved them to this sacrifice to their deity.

Throughout the continuation of the Sun Dance proper, which was largely confined to the south side of the great central ring, an endless succession of other ceremonies was going on, some of which are still clear to me, but many of which I no longer can recall.

About noon of this day the "Buffalo Dance" began, and lasted through the better part of the afternoon. Bar a great herd of several thousand buffalo then still ranging far to the north-west of the Black Hills, this magnificent animal, which for generations had furnished the tribe their most highly prized food and clothing supply, had forever disappeared from the plains, fallen before the mercenary rifles of white robe hunters, who took pelts by hundreds of thousands, and left carcasses to rot and bones to whiten where their quarry fell. That they were all dead and gone and disappeared for good and all, no Sioux could then be made to believe; for had they not always found them migratory as were they themselves, had not their ancestors long generations back *travoised* westward from the very foothills of the Appalachians, following the slow drift of the buffalo toward the setting sun? Often, to be sure, they disappeared from some favourite camp site, like the French Lick, but never more than a few days' journey was needed to locate untold thousands of these great black beauties, comfortably settled on fresh range.

Apparently this dance was an appeal for a return of the prolific herds.

It was opened by a long invocation, addressed apparently to the sun by an aged medicine man. Then he attached to a rope hanging from the top of the *Wahkan* pole first the figure of a man, about eighteen inches in length, and beneath it the

figure of a buffalo bull, each cut out of pieces of rawhide. These figures were fashioned with extraordinary fidelity to every detail of every outline of man and animal, and, indeed, were startlingly complete. When so attached, these figures remained swinging about fifteen feet above the ground. Next, heralded by the low-toned, booming notes of the tom-tom, entered at a sharp trot a chief, mounted, at the head of forty or fifty dismounted warriors, all stripped and painted as for war, each armed with rifle or pistol, and circled three times around the pole from left to right, who, as they ran, loaded and fired as rapidly as possible at the pendent figures, chanting as they ran. The third circuit finished, the chief led his men to the west of the ring and grouped them facing the pole.

Thereafter in rapid succession so entered, ran, shot, and chanted other squads, until probably five hundred warriors were so assembled. By this time both figures were bullet-riddled, but still hanging where first placed.

Then the entire band, made up of the several squads, started trotting about the pole, massed so closely about it that many were firing practically straight up in the air, so straight it was simply a miracle that none in or about the lodge were killed or hurt by the actual rain of bullets certainly falling near about us. Really, one might almost as well have been under direct fire.

"Boys," called Conley, hunching his head down deep between his shoulders, "I surely neve' had no use fer them slickers on top o' a stick tenderfeet holds over their haids in a rain, but if they've got airy one g'aranteed bum-proof, mama! but wouldn't she come handy now! An' th' hell of it is if airy one o' us gets winged, we won't know which o' them lead rain-makers we ought to kill! Wish we was all prairie dogs an' close to ou' holes!"

Sentiments I am certain every one of us cordially echoed,

for during the hour or more this Buffalo Dance lasted, there was scarcely a moment we were not directly threatened with the receipt of a heavier load of lead than we could walk off with.

Finally, when a ball cut the rope between man and buffalo, and the latter fell to the ground, instantly the dance ceased, and a warrior was seized and borne aloft in honour from the ring, apparently as the potter of the buffalo, though however they could tell whose shot brought down the image was past understanding.

Toward evening we all drove back to the Agency for supper.

About nine o'clock Conley, Changro, and I rode back to the Sun Dance, and there remained throughout the night; and there, too, in and about the lodge, stayed the entire tribe, feasting on stewed dog and coffee, stuffing themselves hour after hour to a surfeit none but a savage could stand, discussing the ceremony, boasting how well some kinsman dancer was enduring his fast and dance, and betting that he would honourably acquit himself in the final torture of the " tie-up " to the Sun Pole, yarned, laughed, and amused themselves as did the old Roman audience while slippery, dark red patches in the arena were being sprinkled with sand, in preparation for the entry of the next group of gladiators.

And throughout the slow-dragging hours of the night the dance went on, with few brief intervals of rest, the monotonous drone of the feeble whistles keeping time to the pad-pad, pad-pad of dropping heels, the eyes of every dancer fixed fast upon the moon—for, as sister to the sun, she next to him held their reverence.

As for ourselves, little attention was paid to us by the Sioux—a few were surly, but most indifferent.

To us the scene was weird and awful past adequate description.

In the central ring, dimly lighted by the moon and stars, the thin, wasted, haggard forms of the fasting dancers looked like pale ghosts of demons, prey-hunting in a spirit land.

Beneath the shadow of the shelter, half lighted by many little camp fires over which dogs were stewing, beef roasting, and coffee boiling, the tribe was gathered, grouped closest about the fires, whose flickering flames tinted the bronze of the savage Sioux faces to such a sinister shade of red as made the merriest of them something to shudder at.

The following day was almost wholly given up—in so far as the side ceremonies were concerned—to a rite nearly akin to, if not identical with, Christian baptism. Babies born within the year were brought by their fathers and mothers to an old medicine man, who, taking each child in turn, held it up toward the sun, and then laid it at the foot of the Sun Pole. Next he drew a narrow-bladed knife, extended its point first east, next west, then north and south, and then proceeded to pierce the child's ears. This finished, and the child restored to its mother, a grandfather or father of the family made an address, in which he besought for the child the friendship of the tribe and their best wishes for its health, for its success in chase and war if a man child, for its happy marriage if a girl, ending by humbly begging the poor of the tribe to come and receive as free gifts all the largess the family were able to bestow, a charitable offering or sacrifice in behalf of favour for the child.

While the address was in progress, the squaws were piling near the pole all the goods the family could afford, and, in the cases of several exceptionally fond parents, evidently far more than they could afford—yards of blue and red broadcloth, calicoes, moccasins, tunics, leggings, some newly made for this offering, some taken then and there from the wearers' persons, provisions, *parflèches*, saddles, and a few arms. One loving

mother, a really beautiful young squaw, stripped off and added to her pile a superb fawn skin tunic, ornamented with not less than two or three hundred elk teeth worth a dollar apiece.

Many added one or more horses to their offering. I remember Trader Blanchard told me that the week before the Sun Dance he sold sixty thousand yards of various cloths, besides many other goods, for offerings at this dance!

The elder's speech finished and the gifts gathered, a stampede and greedy scramble for this wealth ensued, in which it seemed to me rich vied with poor for the prizes. But it was a good-natured struggle—the first to lay hands on was the one to have—and there was little of first right disputing. The horse gifts made no end of fun, for they were turned loose in the ring without even a bit of rope on, and not a few were unbroken broncos, resentful of man-handling, and yet only to be taken by *coup de main*. Young bucks lit all over each offered horse like flies, only to be kicked or tossed galley west, until at length some lucky one got a stout grip on mane with one hand and nostrils by the other, thus choking the struggling prize to surrender.

At noon of the succeeding day the hour of supreme sacrificial trial had arrived for all who had vowed to undergo it—the "tieing up" to the Sun Pole—of whom, according to my recollection, there were only nine, and it found them wan, thin, and exhausted of body, but still strong of spirit.

Four-plait rawhide ropes hung from the top of the pole, the lower half of each unbraided and twisted into two strands, a loop at the end of each.

Each candidate in turn was laid at the foot of the Sun Pole. The chief medicine man then drew his narrow-bladed knife, extended it toward each of the four cardinal points of the compass, bent over the candidate, and passed the blade

beneath and through a narrow strip of flesh on each breast, the puncture being scarcely more than a half-inch in breadth, stuck a stout, hardwood skewer through each of the two openings so made, and, lastly, looped each of the two ends of one of the hanging ropes over each of the two skewers—torture the candidates endured without plaint or the flinching of a muscle.

This finished, the candidate was helped to his feet and given a long, stout staff—to help him in his terrible task of rending his own flesh till the skewers were torn from their lodgment in his breast!

Some pulled slowly but steadily and strongly backward, aided by their staffs, until the skin of their breasts was drawn out eighteen inches, while that of their backs was tight as a drum head. Others jumped and bucked on their ropes like a bronco suffering the indignity of his first saddle.

Yet no cry escaped their lips; no eye showed pain!

On they struggled, and yet on, blood flowing freely from their wounds, until worn nature could do no more, and one after another fell fainting on his leash!

To fail of breaking loose was a lasting disgrace, only to be partially redeemed by heavy presents to the tribe. And thus it happened that as each fell his nearest and dearest ran up and fiercely beat and kicked him to rouse him to new effort.

The spirit and courage to break loose all had, but only one still owned store of strength sufficient for the awful task.

After struggling until so weak they could no longer be made to rise, eight were bought off by presents, and their skewers cut loose by the medicine man.

The ninth man, the husband, by the way, of the one squaw dancer, after repeatedly falling in a faint, at last roused himself, cast aside his staff, staggered up to the pole, and, commanding every last remaining grain of strength, bounded

violently away from the pole, bounded with such force that his body swung on the rope free on the ground so hard that when he again hit the ground he was free of the rope! A plucky and a strong one indeed was he—tied to the pole nearly an hour and a half!

And this man's squaw was well worthy of her lord, for, while not herself tied up, she submitted herself to sacrificial torture, in the severe scarifying of her arms, undertaken by none of her fellow dancers!

Thus was the vow of this brave pair honestly and dearly paid.

So sacrificed the Sioux to the sun, as the chief of their many deities.

While we know little enough of the details of their cult, we know much to their credit, socially and morally, they certainly owed to it: we know it for a religion broad enough in scope, sound enough in ethics, and strong enough in its hold upon its adherents to have made them a "good" people as we first found them; a kindly, loving people among their own kith and kin; a charitable people, always free givers to the poor, and generous helpers of any in distress, whether of their own or of hostile blood; a truthful people that hated a forked tongue, to whom it was harder to lie than for the average "Christian" to tell the truth; a race of virtuous, honest wives and devoted mothers; a race of iron-hearted men that condemned to a life at the most menial tasks any guilty of poltroonery; a race that never stole, except as they took spoils, won in the manly game of war at hazard of their lives; a race lofty in its thought and eloquent in its expression; a race of stoics that bore most terrible pain with all the patient fortitude ever shown under torture by the most heroic Christian martyr; happy fatalists who went chanting to their death, placid in the certainty of their conviction of enjoying

immortality in the Happy Hunting Grounds of the Great Spirit.

Surely, in the light of such results, a religion worth owning and a deity worth praying to, let whomsoever may sneer at it as pagan!

And why not the sun as deity? Why not the one supreme potentiality of all nature, that, obviously alike to savage and to sage, holds the means to make or mar our destinies? Why not the sun, the very keystone to the great cosmic work of the Creator?

Who that has revelled and bathed in the sun's warm rays and shivered under cloud, that has observed earth's generous largess when kissed by sunlight and her chill poverty when the sun long denies himself, can offensively cry pagan of a sun worshipper?

CHAPTER TEN

END OF THE TRAIL (COWBOY LOGIC AND FROLIC)

We were jogging along in the saddle across the divide between the Rawhide and the Niobrara, Concho Curly and I, *en route* from Cheyenne to the ranch to begin the spring calf round-up.

Travelling the lower trail, we had slept out on our saddle-blankets the night before, beside the sodden wreck of a fire in a little cottonwood grove on Rawhide.

While the night there passed was wretched and comfortless to the last degree, for even our slickers were an insufficient protection against the torrents of warm rain that fell upon us hour after hour, the curtain of gray morning mists that hedged us round about was scarce lifted at bidding of the new day's sun, before eyes, ears, and nostrils told us Nature had wrought one of her great miracles while we slept.

All seed life, somnolent so long in whatever earthly cells the winds and rains had assisted to entomb it, had awakened and arisen into a living force; tree vitality, long hibernating invisible, even in sorely wounded, lightning-riven, gray cottonwood torsos, was asserting itself; voices long still, absent God alone knows where, were gladly hailing the return of the spring.

We had lain down in a dull gray dead world, to awaken in a world pulsing with the life and bright with the colour of sprouting seed and revivifying sap.

Our eyes had closed on tree trunks gaunt and pale, a veritable spectral wood; on wide stretches of buffalo grass, withered yellow and prone upon the ground, the funereal aspect of the land heightened by the grim outlines of two Sioux warriors lashed on pole platforms for their last resting-place in the branches above our heads, fragments of a faded red blanket pendent and flapping in the wind beneath one body, a blue blanket beneath the other, grisly neighbours who appeared to approach or recede as our fire alternately blazed and flickered —both plainly warriors, for beneath each lay the whitening bones of his favourite war pony, killed by his tribesmen to provide him a mount in the Spirit Land.

It was a voiceless, soundless night before the storm came, bar the soughing of the wind, the weary creaking of bare branches, the feeble murmur of the brook (drunk almost dry by the thirsty land), and the flap-flap of our neighbours' last raiment.

Our eyes opened upon trees crowned with the pale green glory of bursting buds, upon valley and hill slopes verdant as the richest meadow; our ears were greeted with the sweet voices of birds chanting a welcome to the spring, and the rollicking song of a brimful stream, merry over the largess it now bore for man and beast and bird and plant, while the

sweet, humid scents of animate, palpitant nature had driven from our nostrils the dry, horrid odours of the dead.

So comes the spring on the plains—in a single night!

Concho Curly was a raw, unlettered, freckled product of a Texas pioneer's cabin isolated in a nook of the west slope of the hills about the head of the Concho River, near where they pitch down to the waterless, arid reaches of the staked plains.

But the miracle of the spring, appealing to the universal love of the mysterious, had set even Curly's untrained brain questioning and philosophising.

After riding an hour or more silent, his chin buried in the loose folds of his neckerchief, Curly sighed deeply and then observed:

"Ol' man, hit shore 'pears to me Ol' Mahster hain't never strained Hisself none serious tryin' to divide up even the good things o' this yere world o' ourn. Looks like He never tried none, an' ef He did, He's shore made a pow'ful pore job!"

"Why, Curly," I asked, "what makes you think so?"

"Some fellers has so dod-blamed much an' some so dod-burned little," he replied. "Why, back whar you-all comes from, thar's oodles o' grass an' fodder an' water the hull year, ain't they, while out here frequent hit's so fur from grass to water th' critters goes hungry to drink an' dry to graze—don't they?"

"Quite true, Curly," I admitted.

"Wall, back thar, then, 'most every feller must be rich, an' have buggies an' ambulances plenty, an' a big gallery round his *jacal*, an' nothin' to do but set on her all day studdyin' what new bunch o' prittys he'll buy for his woman, an' wettin' his whistle frequent with rot-gut to he'p his thinker *select* new kinds o' throat-ticklin' grub to feed his face an' new kinds o' humany quilts an goose-hair pillers to git to lay on,

while out here a hull passle o' fellers is so dod-burned pore they don't even own a name, an' hull families lives 'n' dies 'thout ever gettin' to set in a buggy or to eat anythin' but co'n pone an' sow belly, 'thout no fixin's or dulces to chase them, like th' puddin's an' ice cream you gits to town ef you've got th' spondulix an' are willin' to blow yourse'f reckless.

" On th' level, you cain't make me believe Ol' Mahster had anythin' to do with th' makin' o' these yere parts out yere—ef He had, He'd a shore give us fellers a squarer deal; 'pears to me like when His job was nigh done an' he was sorta tired an' restin', the boys musta got loose an' throwed this part o' th' country together, kinda careless-like, outen th' leavin's."

And on and on he monologued, plucking an occasional " yes " or " no " from me, till apparently a new line of reflection diverted him and he fell silent to study where it might lead him.

Presently, when I was lolling comfortably in the saddle, half dozing, he nudged me in the ribs with the butt of his quirt and remarked:

" Say, ol' man! I reckon I musta been sleep-walkin' an' eatin' loco weed, for I been arguin' plumb wrong.

" Come to think o' hit, while we-all that's pore has to work outrageous to make a skimp of a livin', you'all that's rich has to work a scandalous sight harder to git to keep what you got.

" An' then there's ice! Jest think o' ice! Th' rich has he rin th' summer, but d——n me ef th' pore don't get her in th' winter, good an' plenty—makin' it look like th' good things o' this world is whacked up mighty nigh even, after all, an' that we-all hain't got no roar comin' to us."

Thus happily settled his recent worries, Curly himself dropped off into a contented doze, and left me to resume mine.

The season opening promised to be an unusually busy one. It was obvious we were nearing the crest of a three-years' boom. Wild range cattle were selling at higher prices than ever before or since. The Chicago beef-market was correspondingly strong. But there were signs of a reaction that made me anxious to gather and ship my fat beeves soon as possible, before the tide turned.

Every winter two thirds of my herd drifted before the bitter blizzards south-east into the sand hills lying between the sink of Snake Creek and the head of the Blue, a splendid winter range where snow never lay long, and out of which cattle came in the spring in unusually good condition.

Thus, at the end of the spring round-up, I was able to cut fifteen hundred beef steers that, after being grazed under close herd a few weeks on the better-cured, stronger feed on the divide between the Niobrara and Snake Creek, were fit for market, and with them we arrived at our shipping point—Ogallala—July 2nd, 1882.

Leaving the outfit camped, luckily, on a bench twenty feet above the main valley of the Platte, I rode two miles into town to make shipping arrangements.

A wonderful sight was the Platte Valley about Ogallala in those days, for it was the northern terminus of the great Texas trail of the late '70's and early '80's, where trail-drivers brought their herds to sell and northern ranchmen came to bargain.

That day, far as the eye could see up, down, and across the broad, level valley were cattle by the thousand—thirty or forty thousand at least—a dozen or more separate outfits, grazing in loose, open order so near each other that, at a distance, the valley appeared carpeted with a vast Persian rug of intricate design and infinite variety of colours.

Approached nearer, where individual riders and cattle

began to take form, it was a topsy-turvy scene I looked down upon.

The day was unusually, tremendously hot—probably 112° in the shade—so hot the shimmering heat-waves developed a mirage that turned town, herds, and riders upside down—all sprung in an instant to gigantic height, the squat frame houses tall as modern skyscrapers, cattle and riders big as elephants, while here and there deep blue lakes lay placidly over broad expanses that a few moments before were a solid field of variegated, brilliant colours.

Arrived at the Spofford House, the one hotel of the town, I found a similar bunch of famous Texas cattle kings—Seth Mayberry, Shanghai Pierce, Dillon Fant, Jim Ellison, John Lytle, Dave Hunter, Jess Presnall, etc.—each with a string of long horns for sale.

The one store and the score of saloons, dance-halls, and gambling joints that lined up south of the railway track and formed the only street Ogallala could boast, were packed with wild and woolly, long-haired and bearded, rent and dusty, lusting and thirsty, red-sashed brush-splitters in from the trail outfits for a frolic.

And every now and then a chorus of wild, shrill yells and a fusillade of shots rent the air that would make a tenderfoot think a battle-royal was on.

But there was nothing serious doing, then; it was only cowboy frolic.

The afternoon's fierce heat proved a weather breeder, as some had predicted.

Shortly after supper, but long before sundown, a dense black cloud suddenly rose in the north, swept swiftly above and around us till it filled the whole zenith—an ominous, low-hanging pall that brought upon us in a few minutes the utter darkness of a starless night.

Quite as suddenly as the coming of the cloud, the temperature fell 40° or 50°, and drove us into the hotel.

And we were little more than sheltered behind closed doors before torrents of rain descended, borne on gusts of hurricane force that blew open the north door of the dining-room, picked up a great pin-pool board standing across a biscuit-shooting opening in the partition, swept it across the breadth of the office, narrowly missing Mayberry and Fant, and dashed it to splinters against the opposite wall.

Ten minutes later the violence of rain and downpour slackened, almost stopped.

Shanghai went to the door and looked out, shivered, and shut it with the remark :

" By cripes, fellers ! 'pears like Ol' Mahster plumb emptied His tanks that clatter ; the hull flat's under water."

" Maybe so He's stackin' us up agin' a swimmin' match," was Fant's cheerful comment.

And within another ten minutes it certainly seemed Fant had called the turn.

A tremendous crash of thunder came, with lightning flashes that illumined the room till our oil lamps looked like fireflies, followed by another tornado-driven downpour it seemed hopeless to expect the house could survive.

And while our ears were still stunned by its first roar, suddenly there came flood waters pouring in over door-sills and through floor cracks, rising at a rate that instantly drove us all to refuge on the second floor of the hotel.

We were certainly in the track, if not the centre, of a waterspout !

But barely were we upstairs before the aerial flood-gates closed, till no more than an ordinary heavy soaking rain was falling, and the wind slackened sufficiently to permit us to climb out on the roof of the porch and take stock of the situation.

Our case looked grave enough—grave past hope of escape, or even help.

"Fellers," quietly remarked Shanghai, "here's a game where passin' don't go—leastwise till it's cash in an' pass out o' existence. Here's where I'd sell my chances o' seein' to-morrow's sun at a dollar a head, an' agree not to tally more'n about five head. I've been up agin' Yankee charges, where the air was full of lead and the cold steel 'peared to hide all the rest of the scenery; I've laid in a buffalo wallow two days and nights surrounded by Comanches, and been bush-whacked by Kiowas on the Palo Pinto, but never till now has Shanghai been up agin' a game he couldn't figure out a way to beat."

And so, in truth, it looked.

The whole world was afloat, a raging, tossing flood—our world, at least.

To us a universal flood could mean no more,

Far as the eye could see rolled waters.

And the waters were rising all the time, ever rising, higher and higher; not creeping, but rising, leaping up the pillars of the porch!

It seemed only a matter of moments before the hotel must collapse, or be swept from its foundations,

Already the flood beneath us was dotted thick with drifting flotsam—wrecks of houses, fences, stables, sidewalks.

Men, women, and children were afloat upon the wreckage, drifting they knew not where, safe they knew not how long, shrieking for aid no one could lend.

Dumb beasts and fowls drifted by us, their inarticulate terror cries rising shrill above the piping of the wind—cattle bawling, pigs squealing, dogs howling, horses neighing, chickens clucking madly, and even the ducks and geese quacking notes of alarm.

It seemed the end of the world, no less—at least, of our little corner of it.

However the old Spofford House held to her foundations was a mystery, unless she stood without the line of the strongest current.

But hold she stoutly did until, perhaps fifteen minutes after we were driven upstairs, word was passed out to us by watchers within upon the staircase that the rise had stopped—stopped just about half-way between floor and ceiling of the first story.

And right then, just as we were catching our breath to interchange congratulations, a new terror menaced us—a terror even more appalling than the remorseless flood that still held us in its grip.

An inky-black pall of cloud still shut out the stars and shrouded all the earth, but a pall so riven and torn by constantly recurring flashes of sheet-lightning that our entire field of view was lit almost as bright as by a midday sun.

Suddenly, off in the south, over the divide between the Platte and the Republican, an ominous shape uprose like magic from below the horizon—a balloon-shaped cloud of an ashen-gray that, from reflection of the lightning or other cause, had a sort of phosphorescent glow that outlined its form against the inky background and made plain to our eyes, as the hand held before one's face, that we confronted an approaching cyclone.

Nearing us it certainly was at terrific speed, for it grew and grew as we looked till its broad dome stood half up to the zenith, while its narrow tail was lashing viciously about near and often apparently upon the earth.

On it came, head-on for us, for a space of perhaps four minutes—until, I am sure, any onlooker who had a prayer loose about him was not idle.

And perhaps (who knows ?) one or another such appeal prevailed, for just as it seemed no earthly power could save us, off eastward it switched and sped swiftly out of our sight.

It was near midnight before the waters began to fall, and morning before the house was free of them.

And when about eight o'clock horses were brought us, we had to wade and swim them about a quarter of a mile to reach the dry uplands.

From the roof of the hotel we could see that even the trail herds were badly scattered and commingled, and it was the general opinion my herd of untrail-broke wild beef steers were probably running yet, somewhere.

But when I got out to the benchland where I had left them, there they were, not a single one missing. This to my infinite surprise, for usually an ordinary thunderstorm will drift beef herds more or less, if not actually stampede them.

The reason was quickly explained : the storm had descended upon them so suddenly and with such extraordinary violence that they were stunned into immobility.

Apparently they had been directly beneath the very centre of the waterspout, for the boys told me the rain fell in such solid sheets that they nearly smothered, drowned while mounted and sitting their saddles about the trembling, bellowing herd ; came down in such torrents they had to hold their hands in shape of an inverted cup above nose and mouth to get their breath !

Miles of the U.P. track were destroyed that laid us up for three days, awaiting repairs.

The first two days the little village was quiet, trail men out bunching and separating their herds, townsmen taking stock of their losses.

But the third day hell popped good and plenty.

Tempers were so fiery and feelings so tindery that it seemed

the recent violence of the very elements themselves had got into men's veins and made them bent to destroy and to kill.

All day long street and saloon swarmed with shouting, quarrelling, shooting punchers, owners and peace officers were alike powerless to control.

About noon the town marshal and several deputies made a bold try to quell the turmoil—and then had to mount and ride for their lives, leaving two of Hunter & Evans's men dead in front of "The Cowboys' Rest," and a string of wounded along the street.

This incident stilled the worst of the tumult for two or three hours, for many took up pursuit of the marshal, while the rest were for a time content to quietly talk over the virtues of the departed in the intervals between quadrille-sets —for, of course, the dancing went on uninterrupted.

Towards evening, notwithstanding the orgy had again resumed a fast and furious pace, Fant, Mayberry, and myself were tempted to join the crowd in "The Cowboys' Rest," tempted by glimpses of a scene caught from our perch on a corner of the depot platform opposite.

"That *is* blamed funny!" remarked Mayberry. "Come along over and let's see her good. We're no more liable to get leaded there than anywhere else."

So over we went.

"The Rest" belied its name sadly, for rest was about the only thing Jim Tucker was not prepared to furnish his wild and woolly patrons.

Who entered there left coin behind—and was lucky if he left no more.

Stepped within the door, a rude pine "bar" on the right invited the thirsty; on the left, noisy "tin horns," whirring wheels, clicking faro "cases," and rattling chips lured the gamblers; while away to the rear of the room stretched a

hundred feet or more of dance-hall, on each of whose rough benches sat enthroned a temptress—hard of eye, deep-lined of face, decked with cheap gauds, sad wrecks of the sea of vice here lurching and tossing for a time.

As we entered, Mayberry's foreman met us and whispered to his boss :

" You-all better stan' back a little, colonel, out o' line o' th' door. Ol' one-eyed John Graham, o' th' Hunter outfit, settin' thar in th' corner's layin' fo' th' sheriff—allows 'twas him sot up th' marshal to shell us up this mo'nin'—an' ol' John's shore pizen when he starts."

So back we moved to the rear end of the bar.

The room was packed : a solid line of men and women before the bar, every table the centre of a crowding group of players, the dance-hall floor and benches jam-full of a roystering, noisy throng.

At the moment all were happy and peace reigned.

But there was one obvious source of discord—there were " not enough gals to go round " ; not enough, indeed, if those present had been multiplied by ten, a situation certain to stir jealousies and strife among a lot of wild nomads for whom this was the first chance in four months to gaze into a woman's eyes.

To be sure, one resourceful and unselfish puncher—a foreman of one of the trail outfits—was doing *his* best to relieve the prevailing deficiency in feminine dancers, and it was a distant glimpse of his efforts that had brought us over.

Bearing, if not boasting, the proud old Dutch name of Jake De Puyster, this rollicking six-foot-two blond giant had heard Buck Groner growl :

" Hain't had airy show for a dance yet. Nairy heifer's throwed her eye my way 'fore she's been roped and tied in about a second. Reckon it's shoot for one or pull my freight for camp, and I ain't sleepy none."

" You stake you'self out, son, a few minutes, and I'll git you a she-pardner you'll be glad of a chance to dance with and buy prittys for," reassured Jake, and then disappeared.

Ten minutes later he returned, bringing Buck a partner that stopped drinking, dance, and play—the most remarkably clad figure that ever entered even a frontier dance-hall.

Still wearing his usual costume—wide chaps, spurred heels, and belt—having removed nothing but his tall-crowned Mexican sombrero, Jake had mavericked three certain articles of feminine apparel and contrived to get himself into them.

Cocked jauntily over his right eye he wore a bright red toque crowned with a faded wreath of pale blue flowers, from which a bedraggled green feather drooped wearily over his left ear; about his waist wrinkled a broad pink sash, tied in a great double bow-knot set squarely in front, while fastened also about his waist, pendent no more than midway of his long thighs, hung a garment white of colour, filmy of fabric, bifurcated of form, richly ruffled of extremity—so habited came Jake, and, with a broad grin lurking within the mazes of his great bushy beard and monstrous moustache, sidled mincing to his mate and shyly murmured a hint he might have the privilege of the next quadrille.

At first Buck was furious, growled, and swore to kill Jake for the insult, until, infected by the gales of laughter that swept the room, he awkwardly offered his arm and led his weird partner to an unfilled set.

And a sorry hour was this to the other ladies; for, while there were better dancers and prettier, that first quadrille made " Miss De Puyster " the belle of the ball for the rest of the day and night, and not a few serious affrays over disputes for an early chance of a " round " or " square " with her were narrowly avoided.

Just as we reached the rear end of the bar, the fiddles stopped

their cruel liberties with the beautiful measures of "*Sobre las Olas,*" and Buck led his panting partner up to our group and courteously introduced us thus:

"Miss De Puyster, here's two mighty slick ol' long-horn mossbacks you wants to be pow'ful shy of, for they'd maverick off their own daddy, an' a little short-horn Yankee orfun I wants to ax you to adopt an' try to make a good mother to. Fellers, this yere's Miss De Puyster; she ain't much for pritty, but she's hell for active on th' floor—so dod-burned active I couldn't tell whether she was waltzin' or tryin' to throw me side-holts."

But before we had time to properly make our acknowledgments, a new figure in the dance was called—a figure which, though familiar enough in Ogallala dance-halls, distracted and held the attention of all present for a few minutes.

Later we learned that, early in the day, a local celebrity—Bill Thompson by name, a tin horn by trade, and a desperado by pretence—had proffered some insult to Big Alice, the leading lady of the house, for which Jim Tucker had "called him down good and plenty," but under such circumstances that to resent it then would have been to court a fairer fight than Bill's kind ever willingly took on.

But, remembering he was brother to Ben Thompson, the then most celebrated man-killer in the State of Texas (who himself was to fall to King Fisher's pistol in Jack Harris's San Antonio variety theatre a few years later), brooding Tucker's abuse of him, figuring what Ben would do in like circumstances, illumining his view of the situation by frequent resorts to red eye, Bill by evening had rowled himself ready for action.

So it happened that at the very moment Buck finished our introduction to "Miss De Puyster," Bill suddenly stepped within the door of the saloon and took a quick snapshot

at Tucker, who was directly across the bar from us and in the act of passing Fant a glass of whisky with his left hand.

The ball cut off three of Tucker's fingers and the tip of the fourth, and, the bar being narrow, spattered us with his blood.

Tucker fell, momentarily, from the shock.

Supposing from Tucker's quick drop he had made an instant kill, Bill stuck his pistol in his waistband and started leisurely out of the door and down the street.

But no sooner was he out of the house than Jim sprang up, seized a sawed-off ten-gauge shotgun, ran to the door, levelled the gun across the stump of his maimed left hand, and emptied into Bill's back, at about six paces, a trifle more No. 4 duck-shot than his system could assimilate.

Perhaps altogether ten minutes were wasted on this incident and the time taken to tourniquet and tie up Jim's wound and to pack Bill inside and stow him in a corner behind the faro lookout's chair; and then Jim's understudy called, "Pardners fo' th' next dance!" the fiddlers bravely tackled but soon got hopelessly beyond their depth in "The Blue Danube," and dancing and frolic were resumed, with "Miss De Puyster" still the belle of the ball.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCHO CURLY AT THE OP'RA

EARLY in July, 1882, I made my first beef shipment of that season, from Ogallala to Chicago. I sent Concho Curly ahead in charge of the first train-load, and myself followed with the second. While to me uneventful, for Curly the trip was big with interest.

Bred and reared in Menard County, on a little tributary of the Concho River that long stood the outermost line of settlement in central west Texas, Curly was about as raw a product as the wildest mustang ranging his native hills. Seldom far off his home range before the preceding year's trail drive, never in a larger city than the then small town of Fort Worth, for Curly Chicago was nothing short of a wilderness of wonders. His two days' stay there left him awed and puzzled.

It was the second morning of our return journey before I could get much out of him. Before that he had sat silent, in a brown study, answering only in monosyllables anything I said to him.

At length, however, another friendly inquiry developed what he was worrying about.

"Come, come, Curly!" I said, "tell us what you saw. Had a good time, didn't you?"

"Wall, I should *re*mark, that while I had *lots* of times, I shorely didn't stack up agin no hell-roarin' big bunch o' real good ones. Them short-horns is junin' round so thick back thar a stray long-horn hain't no sorta show to git to know straight up from sideways 'fore he gits plumb lost in them deep cañons whar all th' sign is tramped out an' thar's no trees to blaze for back-tracking yourself.

"What they-all gits to live on is the mysteriousest mystery to me; don't raise or grow nothin'; got no grass, or cows to graze on her ef they had her. 'Course some of them's got spondulix their daddies left them, an' can buy; th' rest—wall, mebbe so th' rest is jest nachally cannibiles, an' eats up each other."

And how nearly Curly was right about the "cannibiles"—at least, metaphorically—he doubtless never learned.

" But, Curly," I asked, " didn't you have any fun ? Must have hit up the theatres a few, didn't you ? "

" Wall, I should say I shore did," he replied. " I shore went to a the-*a*-tre, but she didn't get my funny-bone busy none.

" Say, ol' man, that thar Chicago ain't no place for a long-horn that was raised to mind his mammy an' 'tend his kid sisters. Way th' men folks treats th' women folks keeps a rawhide that riled he's liable to make a new war-play about every five minutes. Down on th' Llano th' fellers is shootin' hell out of each other most of th' time they're not busy dodgin' th' sheriff, but th' wildest an' woolliest an' th' meanest don't never put it over no good woman, even when she's hitched to a feller whose scalp he's huntin'.

" But back thar in Chicago a she-scalp ain't no safer 'n a he-one, an' I reckon so less. 'Peared so to me, anyway."

" Why, Curly," I asked, " how do you make that out ? "

" Wall, you see it's thisaway. When you turned me loose down to th' stockyards, I axed th' commission man what was th' ring-tailedest lally-cooler of a hotel in town, an' he tells me she's th' Palmer House.

" Then I ropes a kid an' hobbles him with four bits long enough to run me through th' milling herd of short-horns as fer as th' Palmer.

" On th' way I stops to a store an' buys a new hat, an' a pair o' high-heel boots, an' a new suit, shirt, an' red hand-kerchief, an' a little ol' humany war sack with a handle on her, an' inter her I puts my belt an' spurs.

" Then, when I gets fixed up jest like them city folks, I pikes along to th' Palmer, an' in I goes.

" An' she was a shore lally-cooler all right ! More prittys about th' fixin' up o' that house than I'd allowed anything but a woman could pack.

" Wall, when I got in I axed for Mr. Palmer, an' a little feller in sorta soldier-brass-button-clothes runs me up to a little close pen with a fence round her slicker than airy bar in Fort Worth—all glass an' shiny wood an' dandy stones. In that thar pen was a quick-talkin', smart-aleck feller, with a di'mond big as a engin' head-light staked out in th' middle of his bald-faced shirt.

" That feller shore rubbed my hair th' wrong way th' minute he shot his mouth off, with :

" ' Wall, what kin I do for you, young feller ? '

" ' *You* cain't do airy d——n thing for me, Mr. Man,' I ups an' tells him. ' Hain't got nairy business with pikers like you-all: I don't git to Chicago often, but when I do I plays with nothin' but blue chips, an' bets th' limit every whirl.'

" ' Wall, what do you want, anyway ? " he jerks out.

" ' Want to see Mr. Palmer ; got some p'rticular business with him,' says I.

" ' Sorry, sir,' says he, ' Mr. Palmer ain't around this time of day. Is your business with him private ? '

" ' I reckon she *are* private,' says I ; ' want to see him an' find out ef I kin git to stay all night in this yere *ho*tel of his'n.'

" An' I reckon about that time that thar smart aleck must o' thought of somethin' powerful funny that'd happened lately, for right thar he broke out laughin' fit to kill his fool self—jest nachally laughed till he like to died.

" When finally he comes to, he up an' says :

" ' Why, I *sometimes* attend to business like that for Mr. Palmer ; guess I can fix you: Here, write your name down there.'

" An' he whirls round in front of me a hell of a big book that 'peared to have a lot other fellers' names in. She shore looked s'spicious to me, an' I says :

" ' Now see here, Mr. Man, my name don't draw no big lot of money, but she shorely don't get fastened to any dociments I don't *sabe*.'

" Then that dod-burned idiot thought o' somethin' else so dod-blamed funny he lites in laughin' agin till he nigh busts.

" When he gits out o' his system all the laugh she cain't hold easy, he tells me th' big book is jest nothin' but a tally they use to count you in when you comes to stay to th' hotel an' to count you out when you goes.

" That didn't look onreasonable none to me, so I says :

" ' Son, she goes.'

" An' when he hands me a writin' tool, not noticin' she wa'n't a pencil, I sticks her in my mouth to git her ready to write good, an' gits my dod-burned mouth so full of ink I reckon 'taint' all out yet; an' while I was writin' in th' book, ' Stonewall Jackson Kip, Deadman Ranch, Nebraska,' Mr. Man he slips off behind a big safe and empties out a few more laughs he couldn't git to hold longer.

" An' does you know, ol' man, this mornin' I been gittin' a sort of a s'spicion that Palmer piker was laughin' at me inkin' my mouth, maybe ; blamed lucky I didn't see it then, or I'd shore leaded him a few.

" Wall, when Mr. Man had got done *ex*aminin' my turkey tracks in the book, he gits a key an' comes back, hits a bell, an' hollers, ' Front ! ' Then, when one o' them little soldier-button fellers comes runnin', an' th' piker passes him th' key an' sings out, ' Gentleman to No. 1492 ! ' th' kid he makes a dive for my war sack. But you bet your *alce* I grabs him *pronto*, an' says :

" ' See here, son, they ain't more'n about two million worth o' valuables in that thar war sack, so I wouldn't be broke none ef you ducked with her ; but I reckon Stonewall's strong

enough to pack his'n without th' help of no sawed-off like you-all.'

" Then Mr. Kid he up an' chases me over to a railroad car that's built on tracks runnin' straight up in th' air plumb to th' top of th' house, an' into her we gits—all free, you *sabe* ; didn't have to buy no ticket.

" Wall, sir, when th' feller ridin' her socked in th' spurs, that thar car humped herself once or twice an' then hit a gait that would make a U.P. *ex*press look like she was standin' still, an' in less time than Nebo takes to draw a gun, thar we was at th' top floor, about a mile higher, I reckon, than folks was ever meant to live.

" An' say ! By cripes ! when I come to look out o' th' winder in my room, I thought I'd have to stake myself to th' bed to be safe. Lookin' out was jest like looking down from th' top o' Laramie Peak on th' spread of th' main range—little ol' peaks an' deep cañons everywhere, with signal-fires throwin' up smoke columns from every peak, like Injuns signalin' news. She shore looked a rough country to try to make any short cuts across.

" When I'd got washed up some, I sticks my gun in my waist-band an' goes out an' down to th' ground on that little ol' upstandin' railroad, an' axes one o' them soldier boys th' trail to the grub-pile. He grins some an' takes me into a room so dod-burned big and crowded with folks I allowed 'bout everybody in town must be eatin' thar.

" Soon as I got sot down, here comes a coon an' hands me a printed sheet bigger'n th' *Llano Weekly Clarion*. An' when I told him I was much obliged, but I'd come to eat an' not to read, blamed ef that thar coon didn't think o' somethin' so funny he nigh split hisself. 'Pears like mos' everybody has a hell of a onusual lot of laugh in 'em back thar.

" Wall, bein' dod-burned hungry, an' allowin' I'd have a

bang-up feed, an' rememberin' you Yankees talkin' on th' round-up 'bout what slick eatin' lobsters makes, I tells th' coon to bring me a dozen lobsters an' a cup of coffee.

"'Wha-what's dat you say, boss? How many lobsters does you want?' says th' coon.

"'A plumb dozen, you black hash-slinger!' says I, 'an' hump yourself *pronto*, for my tape-worm's hollerin' for fodder.'

"Off slides Mr. Coon, lookin' at me sorta scared-like outen th' corner o' his off eye, to the far end o' th' room.

"Wall, thar I set for about twenty minutes, hopin' lobsters was bigger'n oysters an' wonderin' ef I'd ordered enough to fill up me an' th' worm, when, lookin' up, here come up th' room a p'rcession of twelve niggers, each nigger carryin' a plate about half th' size of a saddle blanket, an' on each plate a hell of a big red critter, most of laigs an' claws, that looked like a overgrowed Gila monster with war-paint on.

"An' when th' lead coon stops in front of me an' says, 'Here's your dozen lobsters, sir,' I jest nachally nigh fell dead right thar, knowin' Stonewall was up agin it harder'n ever before in his life.

"Say! I never wanted a cayuse so bad in my life; ef I had one I'd shore have skipped—forked him an' split the scenery open gittin' away from them war-painted animiles—but thar I was afoot!

"So I bunches up my nerve an' says:

"'Say, coon, I done expected a bunch of th' boys to feed with me, but they hain't showed up. Me an' th' worm will tackle a pair of them red jaspers, an' you fellers put the other ten where they cain't git away till th' boys comes.'

"Then, not lettin' on to th' city chaps settin' an' grinnin' all round me that I wa'n't raised in th' same lot with lobsters, I takes my knife an' fork an' lites in to go to eatin', when I'll

just be eternally d——d if I didn't nigh go crazy to find them critturs was jest nachally *all* hoofs an' horns—nairy a place on 'em from end to end airy human's jaws could ever git to feed on.

" An' I was about to jerk my gun an' shoot one apart to find out what his insides was like, when a feller settin' next showed me how to knock th' horns off an' git at th' meat proper.

" Then me an' th' worm got busy good an' plenty, for th' meat was sweeter an' tenderer even than 'possum.

" Before we got done we shore chambered five of them animiles, an' when I paid th' bill an' sashayed out, it was with regrets I didn't have my war sack handy to pack off th' rest in.

" Come evenin', I moseyed up to Mr. Man's pen an' axed him what was th' finest, highest-priced show in town, an' he told me she was to a the-*a*-tre called th' Op'ra.

" So out I goes, an' ropes another kid an' gits him to steer me to her.

" Arrived to th' the-*a*-tre, I prances up to th' ticket-wagon an' says, sorta reckless :

" ' Pardner, jest hand me out a document for th' best place to set in you got ; price is no object, it's th' *best* in your show for Stonewall,' privately allowin' to myself he might stick me up for as much as a dollar and a half.

" At that he whispers to me, ' Twenty-five dollars,' jest as easy an' nat'rel, without turnin' a hair or appearin' any more *ex*cited than Dunc. Blackburn sticking up a stage-coach.

" Twenty-fi-five plunks to get to set a hour or so to see a little ol' dod-burned fool play-actin' ! I'll just be —— —— —— if that wa'n't goin' some for Stonewall ! Nigh three weeks' wages to git to ' ante an' come in,' an' no tellin' what raises he'd have to stand after drawin' cards !

" However, allowin' I'd take a chance, I skinned off five fives from my little ol' bank-roll and passes 'em over to Mr. Holdup, an' then he picks up an' shuffles a deck of little cards an' deals me off six of them.

" Course I didn't know whatever his game was, makin' me a dead foul deal deliberate thataway, but knowin' she spelled trouble, I shoves one of th' cards back to him an' says :

" ' Mr. Holdup, I don't know jest what liberties a gentleman is allowed to take with a deck back here, but out West whar I come from a feller caught in a pot with more'n five cards in his hand is generally buried th' next day, an' bein' as all his business in this world ain't quite settled yet, five cards will do your Uncle Stonewall.'

" Couldn't make out anyway what he give me all them dociments for, unless one o' th' coons down to th' hotel had tipped him off my bunch of lobster-eaters was liable to drop in an' want to set with me.

" Wall, then I dropped into th' stream o' folks flowin' in thro' th' door, all jammin' an' crowdin' like a bunch of wild steers, an' drifted inside.

" Was you ever to that Op'ra The-*a*-tre, ol' man ? By cripes ! but she was shore a honey-cooler for big ! Honest, th' main corral would hold a full trail herd of three thousand head easy.

" Wall, when I gits in, a young feller in more soldier-buttons axes to see my cards, an' then he steers me down thro' a narrow chute runnin' along one side of th' big corral to a little close-pen, with a low fence in front, right down to one end of where they was play-actin', an' right atop of th' band.

" Dead opposite was a high stack of little pens like mine, all full of folks—same, I reckon, above me—an' then back further three or four big pens, one above the other, over where you come in.

" An' mebbe so them pens wa'n't packed none! Don't believe thar was a empty corner anywhere except mine. Jest packed everywhere with men and women.

" Th' men all looked alike, an' most of th' women Stonewall could a liked.

" Th' men all had on black clothes, with bald-faced shirts to match their bald heads.

" Th' women—wall, with th' little they had on they showed prittys a plenty. Never see so many women or so much *of* 'em before. 'Bout all of 'em had nothin' on their arms, an' their necks an' shoulders was plumb naked down to—down to where a kid gits his first meal. An' say, while they was noddin' their heads an' gassin' with their fellers, it shore looked like a charging Sioux war-party, for they had more an' bigger feathers on their heads than even Red Cloud sports in his war bonnet, an' some of 'em, if you ax me, had faces about as tough as his'n.

" Women! Say, thar was dark ones an' light ones, fat ones, thin ones, an' a plenty just round an' plump proper. Feller that couldn't get suited in that bunch needn't wear out no leather huntin' round outside. An' thar was a lot of them honey-coolers settin' close round me that kept lookin' up my way an' laughin' so sorta friendly like that it shore got to be real sociable.

" Wall, sir, that band was playin' to beat any band *you* ever heard—horns an' fiddles an' drums; horns that worked like a accordeon, pullin' in an' out; ol' mossback he-fiddles that must a been more'n a hundred years old to git to grow so big; drums with bellies big an' round as your mammy's soap kettle; an' th' boss music-maker on a perch in th' middle of th' bunch, shakin' a little *carajo* pole to beat hell at any of th' outfit that wa'n't workin' to suit him.

" Some of th' tunes was sweet an' slow enough so you

could follow 'em afoot, but most of 'em was so dod-burned fast a feller'd need to be runnin' 'em on his top-cutting horse to git close enough to tell if they was real music or jest a hell of a big lot of noise.

"But what s'rprised me most, ol' man, was to find that that thar the-*a*-tre was built up round one of the roughest, rockiest, wildest pieces of country I ever saw outside th' Black Hills, it layin' in th' end whar they was play-actin'. It shore looked like a side cañon up nigh th' head-waters of Rapid Creek, big boulders, an' pines, an' cliffs, an' a fall carryin' as much water as Deadman Creek.

"An' weather! Say, that little ol' the-*a*-tre cañon could put up a worse storm than you or me ever see in the Rockies. She was thunderin' and lightenin' till I was dead sure we was all in for a water-spout, an' I reckon one must a come after I left.

"I always thought the-*a*-tres was built to be funny in, but that one was jest nachally full o' hell's own grief as long as I got to stay in her. Nothin' doin' but sufferin' an' murderin' meanness.

"Plumb alone, an' lost in th' cañon, I reckon, was a pore little gal, 'bout sixteen year old, leanin' on a stump close up to whar I was settin', an' sobbin' fit to kill herself. She had 'bout next to nothin' on, an' was that ga'nted up an' lean 'peared like she was nigh starved to death.

"An' thar she hung an' cried an' cried till it 'peared to me some o' th' women folks ought to a gone to her; but they-all never noticed none, an' went right on gassin' with their fellers.

"Finally, when she got so weak I thought she was goin' to drop, out from behind a boulder slips a great big feller—all hair an' whiskers but his laigs, for he had on nothin' but a fur huntin'-shirt comin' half-way to his knees—an' in his hand he carries a long *bilduque* skelping-knife.

" 'Fore I realised he meant trouble, he makes a jump an' grabs th' gal by th' shoulder an' shakes her scandalous, an' while he's shakin' he's sorta half-talkin' an' half-singin' to her in some kind of talk so near like Spanish I thought I could ketch some of it.

" By cripes! but that feller was hot good an' plenty over something he claimed she'd did.

" An' when, half-sobbin' an' singin', she 'peared to be tellin' him she hadn't, an' to go off an' let her alone, he shook an' abused her more'n ever, till it struck me it was about time for neighbourin' men folks to hop in an' take a hand, for it was plumb plain she was a pore, sweet-faced, innercent little crittur that couldn't done no harm to a hummin' bird.

" 'Bout that time, Mr. Hairyman he hops back a step or two, stands an' scowls an' grits his teeth at th' gal for a minute, an' then he raises his knife, sorta crouches for a jump, an' sings out, near as I could make it out:

" ' *Maudite! Folle! Folle! Say fini!* '

" But before he could lite on her with his knife, I hopped out of my close-pen into the cañon, jammed my ·45 in his ear, an' observes:

" ' Mr. Hairyman, you're a d——d liar, an' it's Stonewall Kip, of Concho, tellin' you!

" ' Little *Maudy* thar *ain't* full, an' she don't have to *say* airy d——n thing she don't want to; an' if you don't pull your freight sudden for th' brush, I'll shore shoot six different kinds of meanness outen your low-down murderin' carcass! '

" Th' way his whiskers skipped over boulders makin' his getaway was some active, while th' pore little gal she jest drops off in a dead faint an' lays thar till some folks comes down the gulch an' carries' her off.

" Then I takes th' kink outen th' hammer of my gun, sticks her in my waist-band, an' climbs back an' gits my

hat—havin' had more'n enough of dod-burned Op'ra The-*a*-tres.

"An' while I was driftin' through the chute toward the main gate of th' big pen, to git out, there was th' dod-blamedest cheerin', yellin', an' hand-clappin' you ever heard away from a stump-speakin', but whatever she was all about Stonewall didn't stop to ax."

CHAPTER TWELVE

ADIOS TO DEADMAN

For me the range situation in '82 was a most painful dilemma.

I loved the Deadman Ranch, every nook and corner of it, from the tall white cliffs, pine-clad gorges, and bubbling springs along White River, to the billowy yellow plains ever rolling away into the south from the Niobrara; knew every one of our two hundred odd cow-ponies by name, and loved each for some virtue or was amused by some of his vices; even hated to contemplate a parting with many an old outlaw bull or mossback long-horn steer who time and again had given us desperate tussles against any and every attempt at restraint of the liberty they loved and always fought for; loved Sam and Tex, who steadfast through five years had stood true and devoted to me, ever ready as could be one's own kin to hazard any peril or make any sacrifice; loved Charlie Nebo, my next neighbour down the Niobrara, from some subtle strain of prehistoric savagery that must have outcropped in me to form so close a link of sympathy between a youngster bred to all the conventions and one of the most desperate, relentless feud leaders of the Chisholm faction in the Lincoln County War, a man as ready to take a life as take

a drink, a staunch friend to the few he cared for, but a most dangerous enemy—a man who, oddly, in his passions or his cups, would heed no man's restraining voice but mine.

And then how I *did* love the old Home Ranch itself, the first real house ever in any way quite my own; loved the rough, squat log walls that sheltered us; loved the great chimney in my room whose crackling, flickering embers many a night had carried me to fancy's farthest field and shown me pictures and told me tales of happenings most wondrous strange; loved the little, placid-faced pond of the beaver dam behind the ranch, that mirrored the surrounding hills in summer, and in winter furnished the ice that cooled July juleps and "twisters"; loved the plum and gooseberry thicket that hedged the pond round about and gave us the only fresh fruit we had; loved the deep-throated, solemn soughing of the pines, and the merry song of the brook that provided the only music we ever heard.

But stay there much longer I knew we could not. It had to be. The ranch must be sold, whatever the wrench to one's sentimental attachment.

The year '82 was an eventful one to the ranch industry of Wyoming and Nebraska, for it marked the dead line between good times and bad.

For five years prices had been climbing, until mixed range cattle were in keen demand at thirty dollars a head, and fat grass steers were bringing fifty to sixty-five dollars in Chicago, and there had been no killing winter weather since the March blizzard of '78.

Throughout the same period grass and water were plenty and free and ranges uncrowded, ideal conditions for producing at low cost the heavy calf crops and fat beeves that spelled riches to ranch owners.

But there were four dark clouds hovering about the

rangeman's horizon that the cow-weatherwise were quick to recognise meant early injury and ultimate ruin to their business.

First, the extraordinary profits the industry was enjoying, often as much as fifty to one hundred per cent. per annum, were attracting capital in millions, from the East and from abroad; the annual trail drives into Wyoming from Texas, Utah, Oregon, and even Washington were doubling, increasing at a rate that made it sure that ranges would soon become so badly overcrowded that profitable breeding and beef-fattening would be no longer possible.

Second, emigrant farmers, locally known as "grangers," were coming in by hundreds from the South and East; the stage roads were dotted thick with the canvas-hooded, work-bull or horse-drawn wagons of the sturdy, restless pioneer folk to whose hatred of settlements and love of still nooks in the wilderness we owe so much for the rapid occupation and taming of the West, every wagon bristling with hoe and plough-handles and sturdy arms to ply them, a tide of home-seekers in our best watered valleys no sane ranchman dared hope he long could stem. For settlers meant fences, and once the valleys along our water courses were so occupied and enclosed, free range must end, and rangemen move on into the North-west, or reduce the number of their herds and go on tame feed—themselves turn farmers.

To be sure a few of the more stubborn tried to hang on for a time by the wholesale homesteading and pre-empting of miles of water front, but, since this could not be done on any large scale without gross infraction of the Federal Land Laws, few prospered, and many perished financially, in the attempt.

Third, news was abroad of railway extensions north from the Union Pacific and the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, and west from the Missouri River that meant the coming of

settlers by thousands, and the instant extinction, immediately upon their arrival in our midst, of the free range industry.

And then, fourth, under the law of weather averages, we were about due for a winter of still-falling, deep-lying, long-staying snow, such as, there, was sure to come at intervals, and when it came, wiped out whole herds.

Indeed, the handwriting stood out so plain upon each of these four impending clouds it needed no grizzly old timer to read it—as evidenced at a dinner that season given by the American members of the Cheyenne Club to their English fellow-members.

Horace Plunkitt, a witty young Irishman, since risen high in the public service of his native land, was on his legs speaking to a toast. He had just finished some remarks upon the high sense of honour and fidelity to verbal agreement prevailing among cowmen, when Arthur Teschemacher interpolated:

"Yes; a fine lot of honour you, Gilchrist, and Judge Cary show, coming in from north of the Platte and building irrigation ditches in our Chugwater country!"

To which Plunkitt replied, quick as a flash:

"Well, sir, do you know that I expect soon to see many men turning the soil with ploughshares who to-day are making a devil of a racket and putting on a tremendous lot of side over their cattle shares!"

A prediction truly and sadly prophetic, for within the next three years more than half his fellow-diners were either ruined outright or forced to liquidate their ranch holdings on disastrous terms.

Few long financially survived the golden year of '82.

Then there were a dozen buyers for every seller; and, as usually follows under such conditions, while the sellers were all enriched, most of the buyers were impoverished.

For what comparatively small percentage of the cattle

bought that year survived the two deadly hard winters that came next in succession, had to be figured at prices declining so rapidly that only those quick to get out saved much.

So it was trim out, ship to Chicago, and sell all the fat beef steers I could gather, and choose a buyer, from among the many, for ranches and range herd.

Curiously, my cowboys resented even more bitterly than did I myself the impending invasion and wiping out of the free range by the grangers—a few, perhaps, from the selfish realisation that it must mean for them declining wages, but more from an inborn love of the wilds and of the constant interest and excitement of their perilous occupation, and, in some small measure, I venture to believe, from attachment to me.

It was the life that absolutely all of my men were bred to. Of their calling they were proud us Lucifer. For farmers and tradesmen they actually felt and freely expressed the utmost contempt.

From his own point of view, the cowboy was a Knight of the Golden Fleece, while soil tillers, mechanics, and merchants were villain drudges, only tolerated when commanded to minister to his wants.

As pacifier of the plains, he took himself as seriously, and bore himself as arrogantly, as any Roman legionary holding an outpost of the Empire in hostile barbarian territory.

And in truth he was no less a fighting man, a soldier highly trained in the tactics that best suited his savage environment, than any legionary of them all, and bore no less honourable scars of his service.

Throughout the nine months of his active working season, any day was likely to develop a battle in which he could not shirk hazarding his life. Indeed, most days did develop such a battle of one sort or another, and not infrequently of several different sorts.

He was risking life and limb—and well knew it—every time he roped and saddled an "outlaw," and in the spring, when raw and rollicky from several months' rest and freedom from restraint, more than half his mount of horses were sure for a time to be "outlaws" of more or less vicious type; every time he sought to rope and tie any wild cow brute in the open; every night he rode in the lead of a madly stampeding herd; every day he raced a wild bunch on the morning "circle," or rode in the afternoon round-up to "cut the herd"; every day he worked within the branding pen, whether afoot or mounted; every night of electrical storm he rode his trembling horse about the herd, rain pouring, thunder crashing, lightning flashing downright close about him as it rarely flashes anywhere else, attracted by the great column of heated air rising from the heaving herd, two most uncanny round balls of fire hovering on the tips of his horse's ears, cattle falling beneath the lightning strokes, and any moment likely to leave him a lightning-riven corpse; any night he sat down by camp or ranch fireside to a game of seven-up or freeze-out with a mate; any day of the round-up he might find it necessary to object to the claim of some dimly branded beast by a neighbour's "rep"; any time an Indian war party swept out upon him from ambush from behind a point of bluff or the concealment of a gulch, leaving him no hope but to run for the shelter of a rocky hill crest, if such were near, or, lacking it, to cut his horse's throat, and use its stiffening carcass as a breastwork against the charging foe!

It was a *fighting man's* work, the cowboy's!

No wonder he resented eviction, and stood at bay, sullen and threatening, contemptuous of the plodding hoe wielder and his menial weapon.

As well expect a legionary to heat and beat his short sword into a spade!

And many was the night through the summer of '82 that all the outfit not standing turn at night guard round the herd, resolved themselves into a Committee of the Whole to debate ways and means to stop and turn back the invaders.

Of the vast forces behind this first feeble, lapping wave of the oncoming tide of pioneer farmers, the cowboys were almost as ignorant as were the Indians who, a little more than a decade before, tried to stop an overland express with a lariat stretched across the track.

Of its meaning and potentialities they only knew what they saw.

Thus it was not surprising they found it so hard to understand why ranch owners were not as ready to fight off encroaching settlers as raiding Indians, and " chase them back whar they come from."

All lines of strategy they had to suggest were interesting, many original and startling. And for that I failed to find any of their suggestions so far practical that I could adopt and undertake to carry them out, I know lost me no small measure of whatever respect they had previously entertained for me.

One chill night of early autumn we were camped on Sun Dance Lodge Creek, out on our last beef round-up.

Within a stone's throw of our camp fire stood the ruin of the great lodge within which, a few months before we first came into the country, in the spring of '77, Red Cloud's Ogallala Sioux celebrated the last Sun Dance they were ever to hold among the White River Hills and gorges that for generations had been their favourite stronghold.

A few score standing cottonwood poles, with sheets and fragments of loosened gray bark now clinging to them, and then swinging in the wind like torn remnants of a last winding-sheet, veritable mummies of the tall, supple, graceful, swaying trunks they once had been, were all that remained to mark

the outline of the great lodge or hint of the ceremonial mysteries it had sheltered. Beneath the roof these now feeble trunks once had borne, many a doughty warrior had undergone some frightful torture in the fulfilment of some vow; many another had there shed his blood and calmly watched the rending of his unshrinking flesh to win the favour of his *Wakanda* in some hazardous adventure he contemplated; many a stout-hearted youngster there first earned his right to rank as warrior.

Alone, as occasionally happened, about this tottering temple of a primitive people, the place of worship of deities already old when those of Thebes were still young, often have I long stood in silent awe of the majesty of a cult that could inspire its exemplars to unflinchingly court and endure the cruellest physical torture in propitiation of its deities.

But that particular night was not one for musing.

Comparatively few more days remained to me on my old home range, and the boys knew it.

This they understood was to be my last round-up of the Three Crow Brand.

So, while we lay smoking in the firelight, huddled about the snapping juniper logs, as if by preconcerted arrangement, the boys opened on me with their weightiest arguments and shrewdest strategy.

"Ain't goin' t' *shore* give her up, are yu' ol' man?" softly queried Johnny Baggott.

"Give what up?" I asked, for at the moment my thoughts were far afield.

"Why, th' Deadman Ranch an' Three Crow Brand," he answered.

"Nothing else for it, Johnny; we could scrap Indians and rustlers, but we can't stand off grangers and Uncle Sam's land laws. Under his laws they have all the rights; we none.

Two or three years at the most would see us finish if we tried to stay. Once they've homesteaded the valley water fronts, what could we do for water ? "

" You jest say th' word, ol' man," came Johnny's quick reply, " an' what we'll do for water will be did before them post-hole-diggin', gopherin' jaspers ever gits airy d——n homestead within our lines.

" We'll jest nachally lite in an' buffalo 'em as fast as they show up, an' any we caint buffalo we'll shell so much hell out of their ghostises 'll lite right back an' warn their kin folk they better stay to hum."

This from a little, five-foot ninety-pounder any granger could break in two with one hand—*if* he could be caught without a gun—but a man with more reckless dare-deviltry in his mental make-up than I ever saw wrapped up in double his scant quota of hide.

" Shucks ! " chipped in Charley Farrell ; " thar ain't no fight in them plough-chasin', churn-twistin' 'pologies for *real* men. We could take a bunch of corn cobs an' lightnin' bugs an' make 'em run till their tongues are hangin' out long enough for calf ropes. Them fight ? Nix. Not on your tin-type.

" I'm for throwin' out three dead-line camps, one on Snake Creek on th' Sidney trail, one on Sheep Creek on th' Janisse trail, an' one on Rawhide on th' Fort Laramie trail, an' stoppin' every wagon that flashes up a sun bonnet or a diggin' tool, warnin' 'em first peaceable, but makin' plain *we're* dealin' th' cards an' keepin' cases, an' then handin' out lead a plenty to any that's got sand to put up a war play. But *I'm* allowin' she won't need no heavy jag of lead."

" But, Charley," I interposed, " you'd be badly overplaying your hand, at that gait. What you'd be up against in that game Louis Changro well put, the time we thought the Sioux were going to hit the warpath, when I asked him if the gar-

risons at Fort Sheridan and Robinson would not serve to hold the tribe in check. You remember his reply :

" ' No ! Injun he no give a d——n for soldier ; lick soldier. But Injun he no like cowboys or whoa-haw men ' " (mule-skinners and bull-whackers). " ' Cowboy he ride and fight like Injun ; whoa-haw man, he no got horse an' *got* to fight.'

" We'd find the grangers just like Louis's whoa-haw men, except that a hundred new ones would be in upon us for every one we planted, with a bunch of Uncle Sam's troops to close-herd them."

" Wall, ol' man," Charley cooly answered, " your Uncle Sam ain't no near kin folk o' mine, or of any th' other boys o' this outfit, an' ef you jest turns us loose we'll shore go him an' his'n a whirl, too, as long as thar's ca'tridges in our belts an' hosses between our knees, 'fore we'll let a passle o' tame-feed-growin', fence-buildin' grangers horn us off our own proper bed ground."

And mind, Charley's talk was no idle vapouring or bluff, for he was a man ever ready to stack up blues (sperhical of form, lead of material), as long as he had any left, on any hand he started out to play.

Then out came Concho Curly with this rare piece of strategy :

" Fellers, th' ol' man is dead right. Ef we-all gits to killin' of them-all, it's a cinch Uncle Sam 'll sit in an' want to draw more cards than we-all can hand him convenient.

" But I've got her. Let's a bunch of us slip round north through th' Bad Lands, hit th' outside Sioux camps round th' mouth o' Wounded Knee, an' kill up enough bucks to git feathers an' blankets to rig up like Injuns all our outfit, th' TOT's, an' th' Lazy ☓'s, git them two outfits to pike along with us, an' jest nachally make them dod-burned short-horns think Red Cloud's comin' to call on 'em with his hull d——d skelp-liftin' family. All we'll have to do will be to show up

on a ridge an' holler, an' then they'll lite in an' run their fool selves to death tryin' to git away. Caint tech us fer that, kin they ? "

And when I reminded Curly that we were no longer at war with the Sioux, and that Uncle Sam was sworn to protect red and white alike, Curly growled :

" Shucks ! I hain't got no more use for Uncle Sam than Farrell thar ; let's go *him* a whirl, then ! "

Then the resourceful Tex got verbally busy.

" Ol' man," he said, " we-all knows you-all ain't no quitter, an' you-all knows we-all will foller you right up agin hell's hottest back log. So, p'rsonally, I'm allowin' you has good private reasons for not puttin' up a fight. Now, if you-all wants to win out *easy*, without any *real* violence, why not a passle of us slip down an' burn th' Laramie an' Sidney bridges ? That will shore settle them skim-milk experts, for nairy one of 'em will ever resk swimmin' the Platte ! "

" No, Tex ; you're plumb locoed," broke in California Bill ; " you caint fire things up no more'n shoot folks up, 'thout gittin' bumped."

And then he proceeded to prove his higher place in the scale of civilisation by ardently urging we should regularly organise as a Vigilance Committee, duly arrest all trespassing grangers, duly give them the full and fair trial the Vigilance Code provides, and duly pass and execute upon them its most popular verdict—death !

About this time the discussion was interrupted by the calling of Bill and Farrell to stand the next relief on night herd, and the rest of us rolled up in our blankets—I with a heart full of appreciation of the sheer, stark loyalty to me and my interests of my bunch of untamed rawhides.

Before coming out to make this last beef shipment, I had already arranged a tentative sale of the remaining cattle and

the ranches. An inspection by the representative of the proposed buyer alone remained to be made: if satisfactory, the trade was closed.

The buyer was one of my own partners, the Hon. Abram S. Hewitt, who was so confident the large profits we were then earning would continue that, unheeding my warnings and disregarding my urging to allow me to sell to others, he insisted on buying out my interest and that of the other partners, all the rest of whom elected to follow my judgment.

His chosen representative was Bartlett Richards, a good friend of mine, and one of the cleverest of the younger set of Eastern men on the Wyoming range.

It was late October when, after a hard week in the saddle, on the jump from daylight till dark, riding over the six hundred square miles, roughly, that composed my range, we finished the inspection, and I spent my last night beneath the roof of my Deadman Home Ranch.

The ranch was deserted that night of all save our two selves, the outfit away on the Niobrara, engaged in making the last calf round-up for branding.

We had to cook our own supper. And little it was we cooked, for, though hungry enough, we were still more tired.

So it was early when we both turned into the double bunk in my room, Bart next the wall.

But, tired as I was, I found I could not sleep.

There I lay for hours, till the embers died out on the hearth, and the rude fittings of the room were lost among the shadows, all, curiously, save the corner where we had set our rifles and hung our belts, which for a time were brightly illumined by moonbeams entering through the one little window of the room, beams that lingered and glinted on the gun barrels until, perhaps half hypnotised, I fell into a mad reverie whether, after all, *they* had not been a better alternative than,

through a sale, turning tail, a reverie from which I passed into deep sleep and vivid dreams, wherein bridges were burning, pistols flashing, grangers screaming!

The next forenoon we located the outfit at the Whistler Creek Ranch, and there I paid off my rawhides and bade them good-bye.

And, save two, not one of their loyal faces have I ever seen since.

There were no wet eyes at the parting, but the hand-grips were firm and the "So longs!" husky.

And then Bartlett and I mounted again and rode off east down the Valley of the Niobrara to take the night stage south.

Where the Sidney-Deadwood stage road crossed the Niobrara, stood a stage station—on the west of the road a diminutive store and saloon, which was also the post office of Niobrara ranchmen, on the east the stage stable.

The lone saloon-keeper and the lone stock-tender were then the only residents of a beautiful bend of the valley, now probably a thriving town.

We reached the station about sunset.

And who should be there, to my great delight, but my staunch friend, Charlie Nebo, come up from the Hunter and Evans Ranch, twenty miles east, for his mail.

Of course I told him of my sale, that I was leaving the country for good, and introduced and recommended to his kind offices my successor, Mr. Richards.

"Wall, I'll be d——d!" frankly remarked Nebo, "done losed a neighbour I had use fo' "—liked—"an' won a new one I caint tell whether I'll have any use fo' or not. But, son," to me, "this young feller *looks* good to me, an' ef he don't get gay an' totes fair, for your sake I'll make her a part of Nebo's private business to see he don't get cold-decked none.

"An', son, I allows a partin' an' a meetin' thisaway *cre*ates

a special pressin' need for liquor—let's go in an' hit her a few ! "

And in we went, and up against the rude little bar we braced, in deference to Nebo's practical suggestion :

" Fellers, let's stand ; allers 'peared to me th' liquor gits into you deeper an' you kin feel her further when she's chambered standin'."

So there we stood for the next two hours, frequently firing (up), but never falling back, receiving charges of " road ranch rot-gut " of the sort Charlie Russell (that past-master of plains folk and plains craft) swears " would make a humming-bird spit in a rattlesnake's eye ! "

Of course the granger invasion was discussed, and it was a satisfaction to find that the more experienced Nebo held the same views as mine.

" Son, you're shorely dead right," he commented ; " won't be more 'n three more year to th' most 'fore this yere young feller 'll find hisself chased plumb out on th' end of a limb, with nothin' *but* hosstile grangers behind an' below him. Th' Newmans are pullin' their freight for Montana already, an' I reckon agin spring ol' Dave Hunter 'll be orderin' me to pull down my tepee an' *travois* north."

Luckily, before Nebo had time to hand out any more like cheer to my good friend Bart, we heard up the road the shrill " Yip ! Yip ! Yip ! " of the stage driver, crying his arrival to the stock-tender.

By the time we were out into the darkness and across the road, the coach rolled in and stopped, and old John Bingham climbed down from the box, the last of the old-time Overland drivers still pulling the ribbons in our parts.

" John," I called, " here's two of us for Sidney."

" Mighty sorry, Colonel ; can't take you. Nine inside and two on the box with me,"

"Well, John," I said, "that is tough; but we've got to go, and so we'll just sit on the roof, hang our legs over the guard rail, and——" Just then Nebo interrupted:

"Wall, I reckon you-all won't do airy d——n fool thing like that. Why, 'fore you get to the Platte, your durn legs would jest nachally get ampitated by that little ol' iron rod, an' drop off!"

And then, stepping quickly up to the nigh door of the coach, all of whose curtains were tightly buttoned down to keep out the cold night air, Nebo remarked, quietly but with a crisp ring in his voice no expert could mistake:

"You Deadwood gophirs inside thar! Set up an' take notice it's Nebo—Charles Nebo of th' Pecos—a addressin' of you. Two o' Nebo's p'rticular friends needs places to set down inside that thar stage, an' Nebo wants two o' you jaspers to hop out right sudden an' make 'em room!"

No answer from within the coach.

Perhaps a minute's pause, and then Nebo threw his hand back on his gun and resumed, in low tones of deadly menace:

"Fellers, Nebo never calls but three times, an' this is Call No. 2! If two of you don't come jumpin' out o' thar right quick, I'll shell up that coach till she looks like Bill Thompson's back after Jim Tucker emptied two barrels o' bird shot into him."

In the meantime, for various reasons, I had moved up alongside of Nebo.

Most coach loads in those days held *some* real men, and that coach was no exception, for she held McMasters, of Deadwood, a mine boss who himself was no novice at gun-plays.

The moment Nebo finished, McMasters, pistol in hand, opened the coach door; but before he or Nebo could fire I gave the latter a push that nearly upset him, jumped in and

grabbed McMasters, shoved him back into the coach, and assured him there would be no trouble if he sat still and shut up.

Then I collared my all too-zealous friend Nebo and dragged him back to the saloon, where, in another cup of red eye, he solemnly pledged me he would interfere no further.

"Shore, you're right!" he admitted. "She's your funeral; an' if you-all *wants* to quit this range laigless, 'tain't for me to cut in none."

But keep his pledge he could not, as we soon learned.

While Bart and I were groping about in the dark back room of the saloon for our saddle-bags, a wild yell of terror from the coach brought us out on the run.

But it was high comedy of a rare type, and not tragedy, the little coach door now framed.

The moment we had passed into the inner room, Nebo had hurried to the coach and slit the canvas cover of the door with his belt knife, when—outrage of all last conceivable!—there within, comfortably cuddled on the back seat, he had discovered three Chinamen!

Instantly reaching in and grabbing the nearest Chinaman by the cue, by the time we reached him he had the poor Celestial's head and shoulders dragged through the rent upper half of the canvas door, and there they were tugging—Charlie with the cue twisted about his hands and a foot braced on the coach step, trying to yank him out, the Chink clinging madly to the door frame to save himself.

"You little d——d ol' two-legged maverick!" Nebo was calling. "I'll git you yet ef this tail-holt don't slip none. Come *out* o' thar an' I'll tie a couple o' you on th' boot—good enough for such little tail-growin' 'pologies for humans as you-all."

And when I insisted he turn the Chink loose, Charlie sud-

denly slashed off the cue close to its wearer's head and tossed it to me with :

" Well, son, here's a *macate* to tie yourself on th' wagon with ef you're bound to climb her bareback,"

And then he added reflectively :

" Wonder *whatever* in hell I always let a little ol' Yankee kid like you-all horn me off for ? "

A query, however, he himself silently answered a moment later with a parting hand-grip that nearly crushed my fingers.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

A CHEYENNE WARRIOR HISTORIAN

HERE it lies before me as I write, his book, the autobiography of Little Finger Nails, pierced and rent by the two '45-70 Springfield carbine bullets that slew its author, its cover stained with the heart's blood that once drenched it, its leaves yellow and fragile with age.

Racially Little Finger Nails was a Cheyenne Indian—a Chiala, as he himself would have put it, in his own musical tongue.

His birthplace ? Well, I don't know, precisely, where it was ; but sure we may be that it was within the smoke-browned walls of a skin-clad tepee, a tall, graceful, cone-shaped bit of primitive architecture, suited to the nomadic habit of his people, and perhaps the primary progenitor of the modern " sky-scraper." Certainly it was the tallest of all aboriginal habitations—framed of long poles, interknit of tops and wide-spreading of base, covered with the magnificent, thick, curly pelts of the buffalo.

Where was the tepee—his mother's tepee—pitched? God alone knows. But equally sure we may be it was near to some singing brook of the Black Hills his people so dearly loved, and in fighting for return to which his race, ultimately, so nobly died; near to some laughing, merry brook, racing gayly down from its source at the base of some tall, deeply crenelated, white limestone cliff, down along a winding aisle of its own making between thick standing black pines, supple, graceful, sturdy of life and stout of heart as the red race that dwelt beneath them; down out of the sombre shadows of the black pines and out into the bright glory of the masses of light green cottonwood foliage that filled whatever broad valley led the brook to junction with *La Belle Fourche*—the Beautiful Fork—of the Cheyenne River.

Creatures of environment, as are we all, surely no less noble scenes than those of the Black Hills could have presided at his birth and stirred the imagination of the youth of this warrior-artist.

His right to place—and to high place—in warriorhood, no man may gainsay; for I know, and a few others still living well know, he died, with practically the last of his tribe, fighting to almost complete racial extinction for his birthright; fighting against what he and his people knew to be hopeless odds; fighting in the face of promises of peace and plenty, if such they would accept, in territory remotely alien from the tall highlands to whose rugged fastnesses and whispering solitudes they had for generations dwelt loving neighbours.

His right to rank as artist—well, in judging it, please remember that he was an aboriginal, advanced ahead of the fire-making cave-man, so far as concerned his own initiative, only in that, groping for betterments, his forebears had learned that sinews stripped from the loin of a trapped buck

and fastened to the two ends of a bent strip of flexible wood possessed the potentiality to discharge slender, flint-tipped reeds with extraordinary force to incredible distance, and constituted the first really effective weapon that gave men mastery of the beasts and means easily to feed and clothe themselves and their offspring; in that, life once made easier by this new weapon, they had time, through untold generations, to note the largess of light and warmth the sun affords, the chill and horror-peopled darkness that threatens all during the sun's periodical absences, and from such observation to evolve a crude form of worship that first deified the sun and later broadened into an ethical code, no less stoutly adhered to for that it was never written, that ultimately served to make its adherents the stoutest-hearted, the most truthful, the most humane and charitable, and the most virtuous aboriginal people world history affords record of; in that, mentally uplifted by this primitive but most masterful cult, the imagination was first stirred, then grew and broadened until it sought means of recorded expression. This expression was found at last, in the use of isolated ideographic figures and symbols, which later were organized into a more or less definite and generally understood system of pictographic writing.

Measured by modern standards, Little Finger Nail's art is, of course, pathetically crude. Nevertheless, when compared with the best work of his contemporaries, he is found to be easily master of them all, both in drawing and in use of colours, notwithstanding his implements and materials were no better than theirs: his palette, a bit of stone or the thigh-bone of a beast; his colours, earth-pigments, charcoal, a bullet, or a fragment of lead-pencil begged from his captors; his brushes, bits of wood chewed soft, and so made pliable at one end.

When, two years ago, I wrote the story of the last great

Indian war this country had—and the last, now, it ever can have—I believed it to be the only consecutive narrative in existence of its causes and the series of battles that reddened many a field between Fort Reno, Indian Territory, and Fort Robinson, Nebraska. Little did I then think it was to be my privilege to hold in my hands and to peruse another sequent story of Dull Knife's magnificent effort to lead his tiny band of Northern Cheyennes, numbering no more than the slender total of four hundred odd, old and young, back north across the States of Kansas and Nebraska, every step of their advance resisted by a force two thousand strong—all the troops the Government was able to concentrate against them—seasoned veterans one and all, tried in the furious fire that lit the valleys and bluff of the Little Big Horn in 1876. Yet there was the story written by one of Dull Knife's own braves!

Strolling one day, in August, 1909, into the lobby of the Grand Hotel, New York, to pay a visit to General Peter D. Vroom, himself one of the foremost figures of the Cheyenne war of 1878–1879, I found with him Colonel Francis H. Hardy, who, then a young second lieutenant of the Third Cavalry, was serving as adjutant of Fort Robinson while Dull Knife's band was there held captive.

Our session was not a short one, for while Vroom and I, happily, meet frequently, I had not seen Hardie since all of us were youngsters together at Fort Robinson at the time of Dull Knife's dash for liberty.

Those were stirring days, those days of our struggle to maintain our insecure and trespassing foothold within the best-loved hunting-grounds of its native lords, where even the garrisons were usually so slender they were never wholly safe from attack—red days that tried men's souls and bound together all who rung true in bonds unbreakable by time or

circumstance. Little is it to be wondered, then, loving the game as we had loved it when we were young, that thought and talk should take up life and incident as last together we had lived it.

It was then Colonel Hardie told me the story of Little Finger Nails and his book, both familiar all these years to General Vroom, but never before known to me; or, if ever known, wholly forgotten.

Colonel Hardie sent the book to his brother in Washington for safe-keeping, and with it sent a letter, telling its story in simple, concise soldier's phrase, far better than I can tell it; and the book, with the letter safely pasted within its covers, has lain for the last twenty years in his brother's safe.

On the crest of the Hat Creek Bluffs, just above the headwaters of War Bonnet Creek, Little Finger Nails now lies, deep in his last sleep, where he and twenty-two others of his tribe-folk, the last survivors of Dull Knife's band, were buried by Lieutenant George W. Baxter, in a common grave, high aloft where the black pines he loved are ever bending and murmuring a mournful requiem above him; but his story should and may well live for generations among the archives of the Smithsonian Institution, where it is Colonel Hardie's purpose to lodge his unique record.

Following is the letter:

Post of San Antonio, Texas,
Sept. 21, 1889.

My dear Joe,

The pictures in the canvas-covered book with the holes in it were drawn by a Northern Cheyenne Indian while in confinement at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, during the Winter of 1878–1879. I was then post-adjutant. I endeavoured to get the book, but its owner and maker refused to part

with it at any price. So I gave the matter up. It purports to depict the deeds of several of the Northern Cheyenne Indians during their famous march from the Indian Territory to Wyoming Territory. The story of the outbreak (later) of the Cheyennes is well known, and as a consequence of the outbreak I got the book, and in this manner:

Four troops of the Third Cavalry, A, E, F, and H, commanded by Captain Wessells—who, by the way, was severely wounded—surrounded the hostiles and charged upon them, killing all the bucks, and, unfortunately, in the *mêlée*, some women and children. Previous to the charge, I saw the Indian artist with the book pressed down between his naked skin and the strap around his waist. Another strap went down between the middle of the book and around his shoulder. I turned to Private Lavalle, of H troop, who was near me, and said: "I want that book if we come out all right." Several others of the enlisted men heard me also. When the fight was over and the dead Indians were being pulled out of the rifle-pit they were in, finally my Indian with the book appeared, dead. The book was injured to the extent of carbine-balls through it and was more or less covered with fresh blood.

This fight took place near Bluff Station, Wyoming Territory, January 22, 1879. Bluff Station was a small, log stage-station on the Cheyenne and Black Hills road. The *Herald* of the twenty-third, or twenty-fourth, or twenty-fifth will give an account of the same. The muster-rolls of Troop H, Third Cavalry, on file at the adjutant-general's office, will tell you of the fight, also. This fight was the closing one of a series of fights with these Indians, and they perished to a man.

FRANK.

MR. J. C. HARDIE,

3004 P Street, West, Washington, D. C.

Daily, on his duties as post-adjutant, in the prison-

barrack of the Cheyennes between October, 1878, and January, 1879, Colonel Hardie had watched the writing of this autobiography, and had received from Little Finger Nails explanations of its bright pictographs, as from day to day they took form beneath the hand of the warrior-artist.

The book in which Little Finger Nails wrote, itself had sadly tragic history before his own life-blood stained it; the fact that it was a journal-blotter of the sort that ranchmen then used for entry of their simple accounts, and that it had passed into his possession, proves this. Unfortunately, the part of the pages containing entries by its first owner is badly mutilated by bullet holes, but on one page we can still plainly read that on January 1, 1878, its owner had on hand horses worth $390, and cattle worth $7,356; that on June 10, 1878, he " bought one Bay Pony, Bally, for $15.00 "—a downright sharp bargain, as horseflesh was then valued.

And how sad a story these simple entries spell may be appreciated when I explain that they describe the owner and his status as well as if we had seen him—a small-ranch pioneer of the sort we later called " nesters," lodged in a hut built of sods and roofed with poles covered with loose earth, located on either the Beaver, the Sapa, or the Frenchman Creek in Kansas; the sort that always towed about with him a wife and babies, one and all of whom, we may be sure, were left still quivering in their death-throes when Little Finger Nails rode on north with this book as his share of the loot their poor little place afforded. The pictographs chosen for illustration record one or another of the almost daily bloody encounters of Dull Knife's band, in his journey from Fort Reno, with troops, cowboys, or settlers, in which Little Finger Nails participated.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE CONQUEROR OF MOUNT TYNDALL

The recent reading of an account of the death, and a review of the splendid life-work in science of Lord Kelvin, has moved me to write some of my recollections of one of the greatest of his contemporary co-workers and close friends, Clarence King, whom it was my inestimable privilege to know intimately from 1874 up to the time of his death in 1901.

Introduced to him in 1874 by John Hay, then an editorial writer on the *Tribune*, shortly thereafter I resigned as Assistant Night City Editor of the *Tribune* to become Mr. King's Secretary. This post it was my happiness to hold until June, 1877, when I became his business (ranch) partner, and so remained many years thereafter.

In this way I came to know much of his family history, personal traits, and brilliant career never yet given to the general public. Few epochs can boast his intellectual equal, none his precise like.

With the keenest sense of humour, his was the kindliest. With a shrewd searching wit ever flashing and scintillating, wholly sparing none, he never descended to hurtful sarcasm.

With a tenderness, charity, and broad sympathies that dwell in few men's breasts, his was yet, *au fond*, an untamed Viking heart, happiest when battling with elemental Nature and her denizens in their wildest moods, a heart that knew no fear of man or thing.

With a learning so comprehensive and profound as to have maintained him among the foremost *savants* of his generation, the hours dearest to him were those spent in absolute or

semi-savagery—listening to the droning songs of squaws about old Winnemucca's lodge fire—idling, dreaming about a Pah-Ute village, watching its primitive tasks and games, delving for inkling of the racial origin of its people—garlanded in a merry Kalakauan *fête* or breasting emerald breakers on a Hawaiian beach, himself daring and swift in the water as the lithest brown maid or sturdiest islander of them all—vying with the best *vaquèros* of Visalia, in bronco-riding contests, for the *bravos* of the elders and the smiles of the *señoritas*—wandering through the corridors and *portals* of the San Luis Obispo Mission with a bent Franciscan, gray as his own habit, absorbed in tales of Junipero Serra's heroism and sacrifices, mentally reconstructing the stirring scenes of the ecclesiastical conquest of California by the Spanish clergy—trailing grizzlies into the cavernous darkness of their Sierran lairs and there fighting and killing them—penetrating the holiest of all Nature's holies her isolated, untrod mountain-peaks, where the thin air ever throttles tighter the higher one ascends, and where, through hours of terrible strain, a second's loss of balance means *glissade* to certain death—silent in a negro cabin, listening to the croonings of a turbaned black grandmother hungry for some hint of voodoo mysteries—such were the hours he best loved.

With never better than an indifferently lined pocket, his was ever the generosity and often the munificence of a prince.

With an artist's adoration of color, a musician's love of harmonies, and a poet's worship of the beautiful, the exactions of his profession as geologist held him so tightly shackled to the weightiest problems of science that he was left little leisure for the exercise of talents and genius that might easily have distinguished him among the most brilliant devotees of the brush, the score, or the pen.

Indeed so strong was his bent for color, that often whole

pages of closely reasoned, deductive exposition of his theories of earth structure were so beautifully embellished, under the combined influence of his fertile fancy and marvellous skill as word painter, that they remain gems of literary art of the first water.

I wonder if any one *ever* sat at table with him unserved by him with that best of mental sauce—an epigram!

One Spring morning of '76, shortly after his completion of the field work of the U. S. Geological Survey of the Fortieth Parallel, while we were sitting at breakfast with his mother, in Newport, he remarked:

"Mother, I *must* write a novel."

"But Clarence," his mother asked, "don't you think your fifteen years as a field geologist in mountain and desert solitudes have been a poor sort of preparation for the successful writing of fiction?"

"Not at all, mother," King flashed back; "geology itself is chiefly a matter of the imagination—one man can actually *see* into the ground as far as another; best training conceivable in constructive imagination."

Again, talking with his life-long familiar, James Terry Gardiner, at luncheon, of the generally prevailing predilection of New York's "Four Hundred" to ape the social customs and lives of the British aristocracy, King said: "Gardiner, New York society reminds me of nothing so much as a simian circus."

Another evening, returned from a dinner at the house of a newly ripened plutocrat, surfeited with the vulgar prodigality of its superficial display and bored by its stupidity, King threw off his coat, and, with a gesture of disgust, remarked: "Gardiner, these people have bought the scenery of society, but the play isn't going on."

And of civilisation in general he once said: "Civilisation! Why, it is a nervous disease!"

Ever ready, too, were his lighter quips, as when one evening, sitting on the balcony behind the Century Club which looks down upon a garden used as an outdoor dining-room by a Hebrew club, he and his friends were startled by a wild shout of merriment from one of the diners, and some one asked, "What is that?" King promptly responded, "It's a Jubilo!"

Even in his early youth his wit was ever flashing, his mind constantly questing, often along weirdly droll lines. While he and Gardiner were mere lads, one day they were returning to Hartford from a trout-fishing excursion, both attired in costumes, gotten up for the occasion, which were far more picturesque than conventional, when, in passing a country school-house where a lot of big girls were at play, the appearance of the boys excited shouts of laughter. Instantly King turned, struck a pose of severity, and gravely remarked: "Always remember, young ladies, that modesty is the best policy." And then, after walking some distance in silence, he queried: "Gardiner, why don't they ever make a girl both plump and spiritual?" A most interesting problem, plainly but one for which, Gardiner frankly admits, the half-century elapsed since it was propounded has found no answer.

That Clarence King should have been such a ready, bold, and successful adventurer, alike into the more remote fields of art and learning and amid the thousand perils that beset the first explorer of the scorching deserts and of the grim, forbidding solitudes and nigh impregnable defences of the tallest mountain-peaks of our continent, is little to be wondered when we come to take count of his ancestry.

Chance had no part in the production of such an exquisitely finished, refined, sublimated mentality.

He *had* to be just what he was—surely generations back it must have been inexorably so ordained. Everything we

know of his family history—and fortunately we know much—points it.

Had an immortal, wise in the propagation of definite human type modifications as is Luther Burbank in his miraculous control of plant types, landed with Daniel King, in the first third of the seventeenth century, on the then savage Massachusetts coast, possessed with the purpose and endowed with the power to determine the alliances and pursuits of this son of Ralphe Kinge of Hertfordshire, and of his offspring from generation to generation after him, with view to the ultimate production of a man ideally perfect mentally and physically, the result could not have been better.

Lacking such an immortal, then certainly a preconceived destiny must have guided the matings and occupations of King's forebears.

Benjamin, of the third generation of Daniel's get, early come to Newport, R.I., from his birthplace at Salem, Mass., was a man of unusual scientific attainments, absorbed in philosophical studies and a helper of Benjamin Franklin in his experiments in electricity.

And, since the ideal ultimate product sought must not be a one-sided but a many-sided man, we are not surprised to learn that two of the greatest artists of their time, Washington Allston and Malbone, the miniature painter, had for their master Samuel, son of Benjamin and great-grandfather of Clarence King.

Nor, needing a strain of blood heavy with traditions of pomp and state and deeds of high emprise, is it to be marvelled at that Samuel chose for wife a Vernon of lineal descent from those of Haddon Hall ?

And, as had become usual with each new generation, progressive differentiation was prompt and positive in its appearance.

Thus late in the eighteenth and early in the nineteenth century Samuel Vernon King, grandfather of Clarence, made history as a pioneer commercial adventurer in the China trade. As member of the great firm of Talbot, Olyphant & King he rode out typhoons, fought the pirates that then swarmed upon the far Eastern seas, won the respect and confidence of Chinese merchants, and there many years dwelt in an Oriental state and magnificence of which the house of Aunt Catherine King, at the corner of Church and High Streets, Newport, still held many beautiful relics—priceless fabrics and porcelains, that Clarence was ever fondling—thirty years ago.

As King & Co., the four sons of Samuel Vernon King took over the business of Talbot, Olyphant & King.

While the elder and the third of the four brothers were at their commercial post at Hongkong, the second brother, James Rivers King, then only twenty-one, took Florence Little in marriage. Of this marriage Clarence King was born, January 6th, 1842.

And into the strain his mother brought rare blood and some of its noblest traits.

Of two great-grandfathers on her side, one was a graduate of Yale and honoured with a degree by Harvard, the other a Yale graduate, a United States Senator, and an LL.D. of Brown, while his maternal grandfather, William Little, Jr., was a brilliant scholar and linguist, and his maternal grandmother, Sophia Little, I myself well remember as a woman of the broadest philanthropy and most tireless charity, who, throughout the ninety-five years of her happily long life, never rested till such of the needy as she was able to help had been provided for, and such of the suffering as she could reach had been consoled.

Early in his infancy the shock of tragedy, the pall of

bereavement, and the manifold burdens of a sweeping family disaster fell upon King's young mother—fell while she was still scarcely out of her 'teens—fell with a suddenness and force that would have completely crushed any but the mentally and morally strongest.

While the story of the series of deaths and disasters which extinguished the house of King & Co. is, as herein told, widely different from the version contained in that most beautiful labor of love, the "Clarence King Memoirs" (a work conceived by his life-long friend Jas. D Hague, written by Mr Hague John Hay, William Dean Howells, John La Farge, William Crary Brownell, Edward Cary, Samuel Franklin Emmons, Rossiter W. Raymond, Edmund C. Stedman, and Daniel Gilman, and published by the Century Club—a work that must stand for all time among the most remarkable tributes ever paid to any man living or dead, for all time an impressive monument to the memory of him who inspired it and proof of the profound admiration and love he in life won from the greatest of his contemporaries in science, art, and letters), nevertheless my memory of Clarence King's own tales to me of the death of his father and two uncles and of the ruin of their firm, seems so clear that I venture to record them as my memory tells me he told them.

More than a year before the marriage of James Rivers King, the third brother left Hongkong in a packet of their fleet for a prolonged trading voyage in the Southern Sea.

Weeks first and then months passed without advices from or of him.

Ships came to Hongkong that had made all important ports north of Bangkok and had no news of the venturesome trader; coasting junks from the most isolated harbours of mainland and islands knew no more.

With much of the coast hostile territory, with none of it

cordial to the Foreign Devil traders, with almost every headland hiding a lurking fleet of pirate junks, the elder son became possessed with the fear either that his brother had fallen prey to the pirates, or captive to hostile natives, or that his vessel had been wrecked in a typhoon.

Instantly his fears were roused he wrote urging his brother James to come, at once, from far-away Newport, to his aid.

Shortly thereafter his anxiety became so great that he found a vessel in everything needful for a long cruise, committed the affairs of the house to the care of a trusted chief clerk, and himself sailed away south to a doom even more terrible than the worst he had feared for his lost brother.

For long weary months he ploughed the uncharted Southern Sea, always hugging the coast, a leadsman ever calling the mark from the fore chains, poking into every bay and inlet, narrowly weathering the treacherous currents of bold headlands, fighting off ruffian junk crews, making frequent landings to question the natives, hailing craft for tidings none could give him.

Day after day, week after week, month after month this devoted brother continued his search, constantly, from dawn to dark, with eye glued to telescope, straining his vision in vain strivings to penetrate the shimmering heat waves of the tropic sea, until one day, like a stroke of lightning out of a cloudless sky, perpetual night fell upon him—the night of total blindness, which ever after shut out from him the light of day as completely as to this hour the deep still guards the secret of his brother's fate!

To James Rivers King the summons from his troubled elder brother came most inopportunely: his honeymoon was little more than over. Yet the summons was imperative and not to be ignored. It was the call of his own blood in distress. Moreover, their fortunes might be imperilled, for the lost

vessel carried a rich cargo representing no unimportant part of their capital.

Thus, so soon as a vessel could be fitted for a cruise to the far side of the world, James sailed for Hongkong, leaving behind a tearful bride who found naught of solace for his absence until the birth of the son she named Clarence.

Meantime, on the months rolled without word of the voyager.

Sometimes, through delays caused by stress of weather, the China packets made some port for supplies and thus had chance to mail letters, or a passing home-bound whaler brought tidings of them.

At first of course, there was reason to hope the lack of news meant he was making fair weather and driving straight for his far Eastern destination. But when at length packets reached Newport which had cleared from Hongkong long after James should have arrived there, with advices he had not made port, it needed all her fortitude, helped by the joys and cares of young motherhood, to stand the strain.

Then one day the cord of hope snapped and everything went black.

Letters came from the blind brother reproaching James for not coming to him, telling of the fruitless search of the Southern Sea and of his own wretched fate, and finally, giving details of the ruin of their house—looted clean during his absence by the clerk he had left in charge!

Surely a shock to hopelessly crush any but a truly Roman wife and mother!

Of course for yet many weary months the sorrowing Newport household cherished hope of better news—but none ever came! The sea, the cruel sea, held tight to its secrets as to its dead.

But no mother ever rose more bravely out of bereavement

and disaster than did Florence King. Completely centred in her son, she bent a rare intellect singly to the task of his training and education. The better to guide and help him, she mastered Greek, Latin, and the modern languages.

But very early in his youth he showed a fondness for Nature and an acute inquiring interest in her works that determined his mother to guide his steps into the paths of science. And so guide them she did, with constant care no time was wasted on excursions into fields of learning widely alien from science, soon choosing geology as his specialty.

Thus almost from his very childhood every step of his studies was a tangential advance upon a certain goal.

No wonder he so early reached it, or that he mastered its most abstruse and puzzling problems while yet most of his contemporaries were groping far behind him.

Prepared in the endowed High School of Hartford, in 1857, at the age of seventeen he entered the Sheffield Scientific School, where, as pupil of the great Dana, he received the thorough grounding in the principles of mineralogy and geology that, applied and illuminated by his own great genius, later made him one of its foremost exponents during his generation.

And precisely as he easily led all his fellows in his technical studies, so also, by testimony of his classmate and life-long friend, James Terry Gardiner, and of others, he far surpassed them in literary talent, and also made well-loved class traditions by his pluck and generalship as stroke of its crew and captain of its baseball team.

The winter after his graduation from Sheffield, he spent in the study of glaciology under Prof. Agassiz.

Preparations for his scientific work finished, the spring of '63 found King and his classmate Gardiner plodding the old Overland Trail from St. Joseph to California with a party of emigrants, up the North Platte and the Sweetwater and out

across the Humboldt Desert, caring for their mounts, shooting their meat, lending a hand where needed, 'prentice to the pioneer life they must master to fit them for field work in the Western wilds.

Stopping in Virginia City to see the famous Comstock Lode, the burning of their lodging-house destroyed all they owned—but their pluck.

Working as labourer in a quartz mill, in a few weeks King earned enough money to enable them to finish their journey.

On the boat from Sacramento to 'Frisco, they met Prof. Wm. H. Brewer, then assistant to Prof. Whitney, the chief of the Geological Survey of California, with whom a little later, cordially accepted as volunteer aid, King won his degree as Mountaineer by a successful ascent of Lassen's Peak.

Of this adventure, Prof. Raymond tells us in the "Memoirs." Prof. Brewer wrote a friend :

"On the way back King wanted to try a *glissade* down one of the snow slopes. I objected, uncertain whether he could stop before reaching the rocks at the bottom. He had his way and came out with only a few bruises."

In those days, most of the men of the California mountain camps posed as desperadoes, and went about burdened with a more or less heavy assortment of fire-arms, the tenderfeet and bluffers by preference sportingt he more conspicuous six-shooter, while one or more of the vest or trousers pockets of the really ready and artistic life-takers was sure to hold a short Derringer pistol, which was often, on due emergency, fired from within the pocket. On one occasion, when in the joint bar and office of a little mountain hotel, King was unavoidably drawn into an argument with a bitterly aggressive advocate of secession, which finally became so heated that King's adversary dropped his hand on his six-shooter. But he never drew it. King was entirely unarmed ; but, standing at the moment

with his right hand in his trousers pocket, at the first hostile move he stuck forward his thumb until it looked like a muzzle of a pistol and then snapped a quill toothpick that fortunately happened to be in the same pocket, the sound of which was so much like the muffled click of a pistol lock, that his adversary promptly bolted through the door. Turning to Gardiner with a laugh, King observed : " Gardiner, in this country there are not many wolves in sheep's clothing, but there are a lot of sheep in wolves' clothing."

For three years the inseparables remained with the California Survey, King as assistant geologist, Gardiner as assistant topographer.

And it was during this very novitiate in his work as field geologist that, from certain phenomena, King deduced the existence of glaciers on Mount Shasta (notwithstanding Brewer had encountered none in his own ascent of the peak and doubted their existence), and a few years later himself proved the truth of his theory, and also made the discovery of fossils in the California gold-bearing slates which absolutely fixed the much mooted question of their geologic age.

It was in '64 that King assaulted that magnificent cluster of peaks that tower above the smiling valley of the Kern, then suspected and later proved the highest on this continent, bar those of Alaska, the actual roof-crest of the United States.

Then, every foot of the region was *terra incognita*. Brewer and his brilliant assistant, Hoffman, had essayed the peak then thought the tallest, and declared one " might as well try to get on a cloud."

King's companion was Cotter, " stout of limb, stronger yet in heart, of iron endurance . . . in his manhood no room for fear or shirk."

Of their mighty goal and of incidents of the ascent King wrote in " Mountaineering " :

" Rising on the other side, cliff above cliff, precipice piled upon precipice, rock over rock, up against the sky, towered the most gigantic mountain-wall in America, culminating in a noble pile of Gothic-finished granite and enamel-like snow. How grand and inviting looked its white form, its untrodden, unknown crest, so high and so pure in the clear, strong blue! I looked at it as one contemplating the purpose of his life; and for just one moment I would rather have liked to dodge that purpose . . . but all this quickly vanished, leaving a cheerful resolve to go ahead. . . .

" I did not wonder that Brewer and Hoffman pronounced our undertaking impossible. . . . Our friends helped us on with our packs in silence, and as we shook hands there was not a dry eye in the party. . . . Asked for my plan, I had to own I had but one, which was to reach the highest peak in the range.

" Choosing [the *second* day of their terrible labour] what looked like the least impossible way, we started; but finding it unsafe to work with packs on, resumed the yesterday's plan —Cotter taking the lead, climbing about fifty feet ahead, and hoisting up the knapsacks and barometer as I tied them to a lasso . . . until we stood together upon a mere shelf, not more than two feet wide, which led diagonally up the smooth cliff. Edging along in careful steps, our backs flattened upon the granite, we moved slowly to a broad platform, where we stopped for breath.

" There was no foothold above us. Looking down over the course we had come, it seemed, and I really believe it was, an impossible descent; for one can climb upward with safety when he cannot downward. To turn back was to give up in defeat; and we sat at least half an hour, suggesting all possible routes to the summit, accepting none and feeling disheartened. About thirty feet directly above our heads was another shelf,

which, if we could reach, seemed to offer at least a temporary way upward. On its edge were two or three spikes of granite, whether firmly connected with the cliff, or merely blocks of *débris*, we could not tell. I said to Cotter I thought of but one possible plan ; it was to lasso one of these blocks, and to climb, sailor-fashion, hand over hand, up the rope. In the lasso I had perfect confidence, for I had seen more than one Spanish bull throw his whole weight against it without parting a strand. . . . At last I made a lucky throw and the lasso tightened upon one of the smaller spikes. I drew the noose close, and very gradually threw my hundred and fifty pounds upon the rope ; then Cotter joined me and we both hung our united weight upon it. Whether the rock moved or the lasso stretched we were unable to decide ; but the trial must be made, and I began to climb slowly. The smooth precipice face against which my body swung offered no foothold, and the whole climb had therefore to be done by the arms, an effort requiring all one's determination. When about half-way up, I was obliged to rest, and curling my feet in the rope managed to relieve my arms for a moment. In this position I could not resist the fascinating temptation of a survey downward.

" Straight down, nearly a thousand feet below, at the foot of the rocks, began the snow, whose steep, roof-like slope, exaggerated into an almost vertical angle, curved down in a long, white field, broken far away by rocks and polished round lakes of ice.

" Cotter looked up cheerfully and asked how I was making it ; to which I answered that I had plenty of wind left. At that moment, when hanging between heaven and earth, it was a deep satisfaction to look down at the wild gulf of desolation beneath, and up to unknown dangers ahead, and feel my nerves cool and unshaken.

" A few pulls hand over hand brought me to the edge of

the shelf, when throwing an arm around the granite spike, I swung my body upon the shelf, and lay down to rest. . . . Cotter came up in his usual muscular way, without once stopping to rest. . . .

"So narrow and sharp was the upper slope that we dared not walk, but got astride, and worked slowly along with our hands, pushing the knapsacks in advance, now and then holding our breath when loose masses rocked under our weight. . . . No human being could climb along the divide. We must climb down to the other side of the Kern. . . . I made the rope fast around my breast, and looping the noose over a firm point of rock, let myself slide gradually down to a notch forty feet below. Cotter then slid down the rope. The shelf was scarcely more than two feet wide, and the granite so smooth we could find no place to tie the lasso for the next descent. Tying it round my breast again, I gave the other end into Cotter's hands, and he found as firm a foothold as he could and promised to give me all the help in his power. . . . For the first ten feet I found cracks enough to support me, hugging myself tightly against the rocks as I could. When within eight feet of the next shelf, I looked vainly for further handhold; but the rocks, besides being perfectly smooth, overhung slightly, and my legs dangled in the air. I saw the next shelf was over three feet broad, and I thought I might, by a quick slide, reach it in safety without endangering Cotter. I shouted to him to let go in case I fell, loosened my hold and slid quickly down. For an instant I reeled over upon the verge, in danger of falling, but seized a small alpine gooseberry bush that held my weight and saved me.

"I could no longer see Cotter. . . . Presently his hob-nailed shoes appeared dangling from the eaves above my head. He hesitated a moment and let go. Before he struck

the rock I had him by the shoulder and whirled him down upon his side, preventing his rolling overboard.

"The summit was not over five hundred feet distant. But the smooth granite wall which rose above the snow slope continued, apparently, quite around the peak. It was all blank except in one spot; quite near us the snow bridged across the crevice and rose—a great icicle-column frozen in a niche of the bluff—its base about ten feet wide, narrowing to two feet at the top. . . . We climbed the first half of it with comparative ease; after that it was almost vertical, and so thin that we did not dare cut the footsteps deep enough to make them absolutely safe. . . . At last, in order to prevent myself from falling over backward, I was obliged to thrust my hand into the crack between the ice and the wall, and the spire became so narrow that I could do this on both sides, so that the climb was made as upon a tree, cutting mere toe holes, and embracing the whole column of ice in my arms. At last I reached the top, and, with the greatest caution, wormed my body over the brink, and, rolling upon the smooth surface of the granite, looked over and watched Cotter make his climb. . . . I rang my hammer upon the topmost rock; we grasped hands, and I reverently named the grand peak MOUNT TYNDALL."

Such the deeds and the thoughts of a lad of twenty-two!

But great as were the opportunities for his brilliant talents on the California Survey, King's splendidly audacious ambition conceived greater still, nothing less than a transcontinental geological and topographical survey.

So in '66 he resigned and returned East to undertake, single-handed, the herculean task of winning approval and adequate appropriations from the President and Congress.

As an example of the winning force of his advocacy of his project, Jas. D. Hague tells us that Senator Fessenden of

Maine remarked, after an evening spent with King: "If I were not United States Senator I would be United States Geologist."

Further Mr. Hague relates that when the Secretary of War handed King his appointment as chief of the 40th Parallel Geological Survey, he said "Now, Mr. King, the sooner you get out of Washington, the better—you are too young a man to be seen about Washington with this appointment in your pocket—there are four major-generals who want your place!"

This great scientific work, begun in '67 and finished in '78, is best summed up by Prof. Samuel Franklin Emmons, himself for many years and now still recognised as one of the ablest geologists this country has yet produced:

"King reserved for himself the final summarising of the work of his assistants and the drawing of general conclusions and theoretical deductions therefrom. This he wrote in '78, a quarto volume of more than eight hundred pages, under the title of 'Systematic Geology.' It has been characterised as the most masterly summary of a great piece of geological field work ever written, and is used to this day by university professors of geology as a model for their advanced students."

At a large dinner at the Pacific-Union Club in San Francisco as late as 1891, attended by a score of the leading business men of the city, I well remember a remarkable scene in which all joined in acclaiming and toasting Clarence King as the saviour of the reputation of California.

"But for King," said one bank president, "the free flow of capital for developing our mineral resources would have been set back twenty years."

The incident referred to was the famous diamond swindle of '72. A large tract near Fort Bridger, Wyoming, had been "salted" with crude diamonds. Two prominent California mining engineers had examined the "diamond field" and

reported on it favorably. The coast blazed with excitement, the more for that the precise location remained a carefully guarded secret.

By some casualty, King learned it lay within area already carefully gone over by his corps of engineers. Surprised but yet unsuspicious, he immediately arranged to visit and study the field, as a new source of national wealth of incalculable value.

So soon as his plan became known he was "approached." Even the crudest and the boldest knew they could not venture to seek to buy of Clarence King a false report. But, desperate, they did not hesitate to try to buy him from his purpose to examine—offered some vast sum I have heard stated all the way from $500,000 to $1,000,000, to abandon the trip and stay with his routine! Of this offer King never said more to me than that "it was a plenty."

But he went, all the same—found raw African stones scattered loose upon the surface, none *in place* in a characteristic diamond-bearing formation, promptly bared the swindle to the world, and stopped a sale, then nearly closed, that ran high up into the millions.

In his sports King was as pertinacious and recklessly daring as in his professional mountaineering. While returning from the finish of the season's field work of '71 or '72, the party sighted a monster grizzly and gave chase. After a short, sharp run the grizzly took refuge in a cave. Arrived close behind him, they soon discovered that while the cave had two entrances, he was still within; they could plainly hear his laboured breathing, apparently nearer the upper of the two openings.

I have in my time known a lot of intrepid bear hunters, but I have never known any but King with the hardihood to pay a grizzly a visit in the solitude and darkness of his own

den. But pay this one a visit King certainly did. The lower opening was high enough to allow a man to enter in a half-standing position, and there he stationed Emmons and Gardiner to receive the bear if he came out.

Then, with a rope about his legs, held by soldiers of the escort, instructed not to pull until he called to them, and with his pet rifle, a single-shot Ballard, in his hands, King began wriggling into the upper opening!

Within was utter darkness. All the time he could hear the heavy panting of the bear, close ahead of him. Presently the panting sounded very near, and he felt sure he could *feel* the bear's hot breath. Oddly (he often told me) he did not see the bear's eyes.

Directly, however, he plainly saw a single wavering flicker of light, appearing and disappearing in rhythm with the bear's panting, and quickly decided it proceeded from the bear's protruded tongue. With this tiny point of light as the only guide to his aim, he fired.

Startled by the shot, instantly the soldiers yanked him back out of the cave, nearly stripping him of clothing and scratching and tearing him about the face and body about as badly (King always laughingly insisted) as the bear could have done.

Within reigned silence. Apparently the bear was dead, for the panting had stopped.

Presently Emmons and Gardiner entered the lower opening, advancing cautiously until at length they could plainly see the outline of the bear, prone on his belly but inclined a little to one side, the right paw held back of and above his ear, as if listening.

Instantly they saw him, the right paw came down bang on the ground. Thinking it preparatory to a charge, they both hurriedly fired and backed out of the cave.

Still silence within.

Again the two entered—to find the great grizzly stretched dead: King's shot had entered the roof of the mouth and killed him instantly; the two later shots had missed him entirely; the weirdly dropping paw, naught but relaxation of the muscles from the position in which he had first fallen!

Probably through modesty, Prof. Emmons omits, in the "Memoirs," his own plucky part in this affair. I tell it as I clearly remember all three describing the incident thirty years ago.

The Fortieth Parallel work finished, King planned a spell of rest—much needed after nearly twenty years of unremitting toil. But it was not yet to be.

In '79 several independent surveys were consolidated into one bureau, as the United States Geological Survey, of which King reluctantly accepted the directorship. This post he held until the new bureau was effectively organised, resigning two years later, in '81.

The three years next following he spent abroad, studying the geology of Switzerland and Great Britain; revelling in color and rhythm with Ruskin; discussing physics with Sir Wm. Thompson (later Lord Kelvin); comparing mountaineering notes with his great compeer, Tyndall; living over again his happy Sierran days before the masterpieces in Gilbert Munger's studio; dipping deep into the secrets of crystalline rock structure as revealed by Zirkel's microscope; chaffing barmaids with Bret Harte—seeing all sides of English and Continental life, collecting art treasures, buying Fortunys, laces, embroideries, old furniture, and a barber's basin, the famous *Helmet of Mambrino*, immortalised by his letter presenting it to his old friend, Horace F. Cotter.

While never intended for publication, happily this letter

ultimately gained public currency through the columns of "The Century Magazine."

This letter, William Dean Howells writes, was "a sketch of Spanish character and circumstance which is almost as little companioned as it is paralleled. . . . As an artist, as a realistic observer, every kind of life appealed to him. . . . From some men, from most, he was of course intellectually parted by immense distances of culture, but essentially he was the neighbour of mankind. He knew the 'world' of his time far beyond all other American literary men save one."

Returning home at the end of '84, King's later years were spent in care of his mining and cattle-ranch interests and in pursuit of his profession as mining engineer—largely in Cuba, Mexico, and the Klondike.

For him many were the disappointments and sad the trials of these later years, unhappily; but the harder the blows, the bolder he faced them; the darker his horizon, the brighter he smiled.

Nor did even adversity serve to dam the fountain of his wit. Breakfasting one morning at the old Brunswick Hotel, at the corner of Fifth Ave. and 26th St., and engaged in the discussion of a particularly vexing problem in our affairs, some turn of the conversation led me to ask why he had never married. "Want to know why, Ted?" he replied. "Well, I'll tell you. Woman is too one-sided—like a tossed-up penny—and I want both sides or none."

Perhaps the one thing King loved better than helping a friend, was a fair chance of a good hard scrap, when the incentive was the righting or avenging of a wrong.

He used to hunt such chances.

Often of a night when our survey offices and lodgings were at 23, Fifth Avenue, he used to say to me, "Get a stout

stick, Ted, and come on." And then down through Washington Square we would go, plunging thence into the wildest jungles of "Africa," as the Thompson-Sullivan Street region was then known, there wandering, not infrequently, throughout the livelong night in Quixotic search of adventure.

Sometimes we found it—as when one morning, shortly before dawn, in a dark alley off Sullivan Street, we ran on a policeman needlessly clubbing a drunken sailor.

The neighbourhood at the moment was silent and deserted. Without a word or an instant's hesitation, King handed me his stick, pitched into the policeman with his good bare hands, and pounded him to a pulp; and then, before the policeman could recover sufficiently to summon aid, we legged it back north for our diggings.

And yet it was of him John Hay wrote:

"It was hard to remember that this polished trifler, this exquisite wit, who diffused over every conversation in which he was engaged in an iridescent mist of epigram, was author of the treatise on 'The Age of the Earth' [later endorsed by Lord Kelvin], which has been accepted as the profoundest and most authoritative utterance on the subject yet made. His knowledge of man and Nature was enormous, his sympathy was universal. He had the passionate love of Nature which only the highest culture gives—the sky, the rock, and the river spoke to him as familiar friends. Clarence King resembled no one else whom we have ever known, belonged to a class of his own."

With a mind filled with rare store of learning in science, art, literature, and world politics and teeming with the most brilliant fancy, with downright wizard fluency and eloquence of expression of his fast-crowding thoughts, no man the tenth part so well equipped ever left less (in volume) of finished literary work.

"Why?" his friends were ever asking themselves.

I believe it was because of the very wealth of his endowments, the multiplicity of his talents and attainments, because of a mind so tireless and fertile that by the time it had sketched one brilliant literary picture, another was clamouring for the recorded expression none ever got.

At the very end, on his death-bed that sad Christmas Day of 1901, his last recorded words were the expression of a witticism gay and brilliant as any he ever flashed across a dinner table.

His doctor had remarked that perhaps the drug *heroin*, recently administered, had gone to his head.

"Very likely," King whispered; "many a heroine has gone to a better head than mine is now."

With or near him through years of alternating sunshine and cloud, through hours of joy and hours of bitterest trial, I now reverently offer this humble tribute to the memory of altogether the most brilliant man of science and letters this country has ever produced, to the gentlest, sweetest, bravest man and staunchest friend I have ever known, to Clarence King.

APPENDIX

THE MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY,
HOME OFFICE, REVISION BUREAU,
DR. V. T. MCGILLICUDDY, MEDICAL INSPECTOR.
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., *March 30th*, 1910.

E. B. BRONSON, ESQ.,

DEAR SIR,—I am now and then asked, "Was there really a Sword?"

Thinking that the inclosed copies of recent correspondence may be interesting to you as establishing the fact that he did and still does exist, I forward same.

Yours truly,
(Signed) V. T. MCGILLICUDDY.

PINE RIDGE, S.D., *July 28th*, 1909.

DR. V. T. MCGILLICUDDY,

DEAR SIR,—I write to ask you to give me a certificate for the Secretary of War to enable me to get remuneration for services rendered in my hard trip to the north country during the winter of 1877, to bring Crazy Horse to Fort Robinson. You were there and knew about many of the circumstances. I was sent out by the Agency. The trip was connected with serious dangers, as nobody hesitated to shoot those times. Most people were afraid of Crazy Horse, but I went and succeeded in getting him to come in the Agency.

I was promised a good reward, but everybody forgot me as soon as there was no Crazy Horse to make trouble and keep up agitation.

I have had considerable correspondence with the Department at Washington, but they pay no attention to me, and almost hint that I am an impostor.

I shall greatly appreciate any letter you may be pleased to prepare that will help me in my efforts, as I am needing money and help.

Yours respectfully,
(Signed) GEORGE SWORD,
JUDGE INDIAN COURT.

PINE RIDGE, S.D., *January 20th*, 1910.

DR. V. T. MCGILLICUDDY,
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

DEAR SIR,—I received your welcome letter and was very glad to hear from you and appreciate your good certificate and recommendation.

I forwarded it to the Department. It was referred to the Agent at Pine Ridge. His report also has gone in.

I would like if you could write the Commissioner of Indian Affairs a personal letter and suggest that they help me.

In those dangerous days when an Indian did not seem to be worth more than a Texas steer among some hard-hearted white men, I fearlessly stepped in line with the movement for citizenship. For this cause I did what white men could not do — no, nor the U.S. Army. I knew Indians and how to get at them. I got much abuse for this risky business from my nation and very little remuneration from the Government. As soon as the clouds rolled away and peace began to dawn, the Government forgot all about me. Now when I am old they disown me and think I am a liar—they act that way if they don't say so. I gave my life for my country just as much (and far more so) than a majority of the American soldiers who are now drawing a living pension. I cannot live many years longer. It is a small thing to the U.S. Government if they help me a little extra. The pension lanes are closed against me. Please write and urge the Department to be *humane*. You are the only man in the United States that can do it. Afraid of Horses, Standing Soldier, American Horse, Little Wound, Red Cloud, Blue Horse are all gone now. If my name had only been recorded in their books I should now be drawing a living pension.

I do not think it fair that for this oversight I am turned down. The War Department won't help. The Indian Department can well afford to do it.

Will you do all you can? Ask some Congressman or Senator.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) CAPT. GEORGE SWORD.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., *March 11th*, 1910.

THE HON. COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS:

SIR,—At the request and in behalf of George Sword, my old

Police Captain at Pine Ridge, I write briefly a piece of Indian history.

Thirty years ago, *i.e.*, in 1879, having severed my connection with the Army, I accepted the appointment of U.S. Indian Agent in charge of the Red Cloud Sioux at Pine Ridge Agency, Dakota.

On entering on my duties I found myself in charge of about nine thousand wild and uncivilised Indians, many of them but recently from the warpath, living entirely in Indian lodges, and in a blanket condition—the white man's homes or customs nowhere in evidence amongst them, school-houses and churches unknown, and these people, wholly and absolutely, under control of Red Cloud and a few sub-chiefs, the tribal system being the law.

To break up this tribal system, and the control of the chiefs, was naturally the first work to be done on the road toward civilisation, hence I began by organising the original police force of the Indian Service as a substitution for the control of the chiefs, and this required months of hard and persistent labour in the face of the opposition of the chiefs and the native soldier bands.

I finally succeeded in enlisting fifty of the best young fighting men of the tribe under Miwakan Yuha, or "Man Who Carries a Sword," as captain, since known as "George Sword."

For seven years, and until 1868, when I was relieved for "insubordination," this little band of mounted police kept absolute control and sustained peace over these nine thousand Indians scattered over four thousand square miles of country, without the aid or presence of United States soldiers, and a United States soldier was never seen except as a visitor, where heretofore the presence of the Army was considered a necessity, and in doing this, these young policemen encountered the opposition of their chiefs, and the majority of their people, and were practically ostracised.

When I left Pine Ridge in 1886, the power of the chiefs was broken, the tribal system was a thing of the past. The majority of the tribe had adopted civilised costumes, were living in homes of their own construction—they were opening up small farms, stock-raising, and engaging in other work, and there was in operation a large central boarding school, a dozen scattered day schools, several churches, and many other evidences of the coming in of civilisation.

To George Sword, more than any other Indian, is due the present prosperity of his people; the value of his services cannot be measured in dollars or thousands of dollars.

He is getting old, and he feels that he is being forgotten, and I would bespeak for him some substantial and fitting recognition.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) V. T. McGillicuddy.

Manhattan Club, Madison Square,
New York, *April 4th*, 1910.

The Hon. Commissioner of Indian Affairs:

Sir,—Dr. V. T. McGillicuddy has mailed to me two letters received by him from Capt. George Sword, a Sioux Indian who in the late '70's and early '80's served the Doctor and the Government, as chief of Indian police at Pine Ridge Agency, and also a copy of the Doctor's letter to you of March eleventh.

While the Doctor's record, both in and out of the Service, has been so honourable and brilliant that his statements on any subject need no corroboration, I cannot refrain from volunteering my testimony to personal knowledge of the truth and justice of his plea for Sword. Frequently during the Doctor's administration of the Pine Ridge Agency I had occasion to visit the Agency, and thus to become familiar with the valuable services of Sword while acting as chief of the Agency police, both in restraining raids and subduing lawlessness among his wild tribesmen, and in recovering horses stolen by such as did succeed in occasionally slipping away from the Agency and looting the herds of my fellow ranchmen. In fact I was present at the first crucial test of Sword's ability to establish and maintain his authority, when, at the last great Sun Dance of his tribe, and in the face of threats of the chiefs to exterminate his little band of police and the nine white men of us then on the reservation if the force was not disbanded, Dr. Mc Gillicuddy led our little party, including Maj. Bourke and Lts. Waite and Goldman, of the 3rd Cavalry, and escorted by Sword and his men, to an open defiance of the 12,000 Sioux (including 2,000 of Spotted Tail's Brulés), then assembled on Sun Dance Flat. The Doctor's bold strategy and Sword's reckless audacity won, but it has not often been given to any men to escape from as near approach to death.

No Indian to-day living, and I doubt if any that are dead, ever rendered such valuable services as did Sword in assisting the transition of his wild tribesmen from warlike nomadic lodge dwellers to peaceful husbandmen.

Sword's claims are just; he is as rightly entitled to a liberal pension as any who ever wore this country's uniform. I do hope it may be within your power in some way to aid him in his declining years. Indeed, not to do so would be—well, I guess I had better not try to characterise just what it would be.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) EDGAR BEECHER BRONSON.

MANHATTAN CLUB, MADISON SQUARE,
NEW YORK, *April 4th*, 1910.

CAPT. GEORGE SWORD,
PINE RIDGE AGENCY:

MY DEAR SWORD,—Dr. McGillicuddy has sent me copies of your letters to him and of his letter to the Department. Herewith I enclose to you a copy of a letter I have written in advocacy of your claims. I also am mailing to you a copy of my "Reminiscences of a Ranchman," wherein you will find I have written my estimate of you and your services. Sincerely hoping your claims may receive the recognition they so justly deserve, a man who has for thirty years held you in admiring remembrance subscribes himself

Your friend,

(Signed) EDGAR BEECHER BRONSON.

TRANQUILO CORONADO, CAL., *March 21st*, 1910.

MY DEAR BRONSON,—

A book was delivered to me by the post-master here in December, that had lain there since June—consequent on my absence from here during the summer, and the post-office's carelessness in not digging it up upon my return in November.

To my great joy I found it a volume by my old friend—"as square as the fore shoulder of a hog, and one that you can believe the same as if your daddy told you," as old Bill Paxton said of you. The old man never had a chance to read the "Reminiscences of a Ranchman." I wish he had, for he could have added that your true tale of the finish of the Cheyenne-Sioux is an *epic* unapproached by any penning of frontier history.

You certainly were inspired with your theme. It's a masterpiece others nor you can excel. Of those that might have attempted the narration—witnesses—many have followed their red brother, Dull Knife, over the divide; most of them could not write at all, and few could discern its lights and dark shadows, its graphic portrayal of history. It was left to you—a pen fashioned in civilisation, but dipped in the golden shimmer of the Western Plains—to paint it as as artist.

It's all good, and to me—well, it brings back old scenes, old faces, old expressions and impressions, and, I started to say, the old ginger of energetic youth. But the last should be classed in "impressions" and in the fitful fleeting column, for ginger at 49—it oozes out—your corx don't hold like it once did. But all the more one likes to look back to the time when things were in the ascendant, and your "Reminiscences" furnishes the trail.

Old N. R. (Davis) came here afterwards, ill almost unto death—then went home and died. Clarence King, too, I met occasionally on his trips West, his later trips—the last time in the Brown Palace, Denver. He had just gotten "Cyrano de Bergerac," in the French, and was full of it, talked long of it as we sat in the *café* together.

Sam Cress and old N. D., the horse, the familiar scenes of the zinc and Deadman, the Agency, McGillicuddy, old Sword, Janisse, the Newmans and Hunter, and last, our meeting with Nebo on the Runningwater, at the Hughes road ranch—no one you know enjoys the book so much as I. You have given me many happy hours and hours to come in future Reminiscences.

I am sorry I have no photographs of the ranch and range. It's all "grangers" there now, about the old zinc ranch and Deadman. The "Kinkaid Act" was the cowboy's funeral, 649 acres for a homestead.

Sincerely,

(Signed) Bartlett Richards.

Wyndygoul, Cos Cob, Ct., *March 26th*, 1910.

To Edgar Beecher Bronson:

My Dear Bronson,—

You kind gift of the two books reached me just as I was leaving for Canada. I took the "Ranchman" with me and read it on the

train. I have never been so absorbed in any book. Oh, how I wish I had not been too late to see and be of the Heroic West. The chapter on the last of the Cheyennes is an epic of terrible interest. It is typical of the whole treatment of the Indian. We wanted his land—we were stronger—we crushed him, even as Naboth was crushed for his ancestral vineyard, and slaughtered his little ones. As sure as there is a God in Heaven, this century of hellish wickedness will have to be settled for; and if ever the revitalised Chinese millions sweep over this land with burning and wholesale slaughter, possessing, conquering, exterminating us, we can only bow our heads and say, "We are reaping what we have sowed; as we did to the Redman, so God has empowered this Yellowman to do to us." If in that final scene there be found in us the spirit to go forth with wife and child and die fearless and steadfast, as did Dull Knife, then shall we have the joy at least of going down like men.

Gratefully your campfire brother,

(Signed) Ernest Thompson Seton.

DATE DUE